REV. JOHN SKINNER,

AUTHOR OF

"TULLOCHGORUM."

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THE LIFE AND TIMES

OF

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OF LINSHART.

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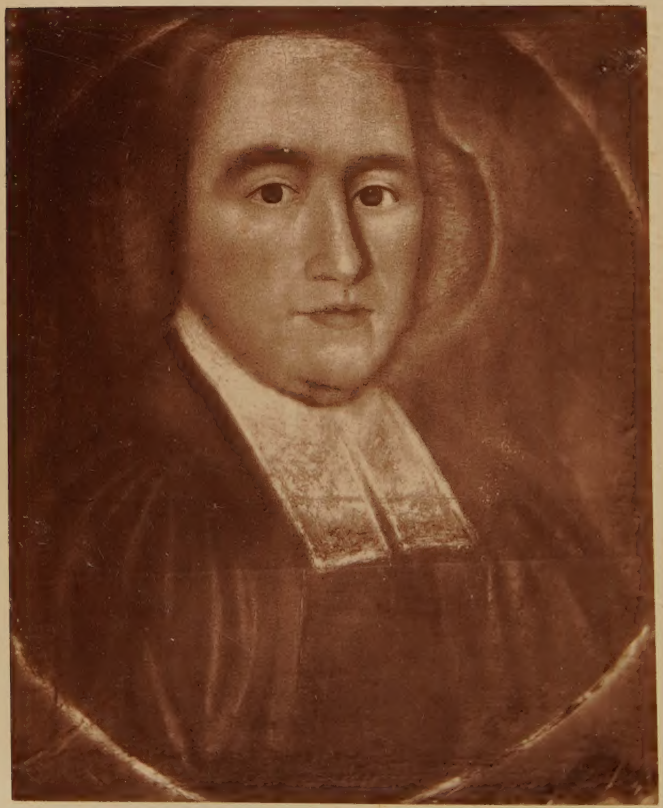

THE REV. JOHN SKINNER OF LINSHART.

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THE LIFE AND TIMES

OF

THE REV. JOHN SKINNER, M.A.,

OF LINSHART, LONGSIDE,

Dean of Aberdeen,

AUTHOR OF "TULLOCHGORUM," ETC.

BY

THE REV. WILLIAM WALKER, M.A.,

MONYMUSK.

"A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich, with forty pounds a-year."

LONDON:

W. SKEFFINGTON & SON, 163 PICCADILLY.

1883.

CHECKED HATHI TRUST
FEB' 2018

PRINTED AT THE FREE PRESS OFFICE,
ABERDEEN.

69/6904

PREFACE.

An account of the long and active life of Dean Skinner, which includes an account of his various works in poetry, history, Scripture exposition and controversy—all of which are very characteristic of him—becomes history as well as biography. It is the history of at least one phase of eighteenth-century religious thought, speculation, and criticism—a history, indeed, eminently fitted to profit the men of this generation, being near enough to interest and instruct, and yet sufficiently remote to admit of being dispassionately considered.

It is the history of an early stage of the great transition movement from the old order of things in religion, in philosophy, and in politics as bearing on religion, to the new—a history which illustrates the slow progress of the human mind towards clear views on such important questions as—

1. Toleration, and the due discrimination of duties as between the State and the Church—especially the Church as disconnected with the State.

There is presented in this history the spectacle of a poor, disestablished, and disendowed Church

engaged in a death struggle with a great and powerful State, each encroaching more or less on the province of the other; the State refusing full toleration to religion, and the Church refusing full toleration to politics; the State requiring "forced prayers," and the Church forbidding free-will prayers.

2. Toleration within the Church—the fixing of the due limits of diversity of opinion and practice—the establishment of a workable compromise, "concordate," or *modus vivendi* for all parties and schools within the pale. The history exhibits the little disestablished Church as confronted with this most puzzling of all ecclesiastical problems at a very early stage of its separate existence, while it had scarce learnt to walk alone, and all but overwhelmed by it.

3. Biblical criticism and exegesis—philology in general.

The further spectacle is presented of zealous and earnest Christian men—even able, learned, and scholarly men—building up exegetical and critical theories, chiefly on assumption and fancy, and raising on them imposing, all-embracing, and all-explaining systems.

It will be seen, indeed, in this little history that the much-vilified eighteenth century was very far, indeed, from being wholly sunk in religious deadness and indifference. It presented, even in its byways,

refreshing instances of faith, piety, zeal, and enthusiastic Biblical scholarship. It contained men who fought, struggled, and suffered patiently for their religion. It had its keen religious controversies, its burning questions. But the burning questions of those days are now burnt out. They are "extinct volcanoes"—all cold and silent, yet by no means uninteresting or uninstructive. On the contrary, they are most speaking and impressive phenomena—*Dum silent clamant.* They witness with irresistible impressiveness to the insignificance and the transitoriness of many of the questions over which men fight and struggle, and they cry aloud for moderation, mutual forbearance, tolerance, and charity.

The reader, indeed, who remembers how often history repeats itself (with variations), cannot but see the advantage to the Church of a full and unreserved exposition of these long silent controversies, and he will admit that it can be done with credit to the dead as well as with advantage to the living. It reflects honour on our fathers in the faith, showing, as it does, that when they erred, either in speculation or in action, it was mainly from excess of zeal for the truth and the right.

To some readers the historical element in the narrative will have but slight attraction, their main interest being in what relates to the man, the poet, the clergyman. But such readers will easily find

their way to what they want. Partly for their guidance, but chiefly for the promotion of clearness and facility of reference generally, the narrative has been broken up into headed paragraphs. This expedient doubtless has its drawbacks, but these seem to the writer to be greatly counterbalanced by its various advantages.

The writer has in the accomplishment of his task received welcome and valued assistance from all sides, including many copies of most of Skinner's unpublished poems, and not a few slightly varied versions of some of the best known and best authenticated anecdotes that throw light on his character. In clearing up the obscure portions of his career, he has also to make his acknowledgments for most acceptable and unlooked-for help from several obliging contributors previously unknown to him. Most of these services are acknowledged in their proper place in the body of the work or in the foot-notes. The writer, however, takes this opportunity to tender his thanks to all who have in any way rendered him assistance, including, of his clerical brethren, the Very Reverend the Deans of Aberdeen and Brechin; the Rev. John Skinner Wilson, Woodhead, the great-great-grandson of the subject of the work; the Rev. Alexander Low, Longside; the Rev. George Sutherland, Portsoy; the Rev. J. B. Craven, Kirkwall; the Rev. R.

Walker, Lerwick; the Rev. James Davidson, Banff; the Rev. W. Presslie, Lochlee; the Rev. J. M. Laing, Blairdaff; the Rev. Alexander Harper, Synod Clerk of Aberdeen.

Of lay helpers he has to acknowledge the kind services of Mr. H. G. Reid, of the "Eastern Counties Gazette," Middlesbrough, a former biographer of Mr. Skinner; Professor Grub, Aberdeen; Norval Clyne, Esq., advocate, and D. Morice, Esq., advocate, Aberdeen; John Bruce, Esq. of Sumburgh, Shetland; also, John Smith, Esq., Queen's Gate, Aberdeen, President of the Society of Advocates; and Mr. William Nicolson, Crown Street, Aberdeen. The latter two gentlemen remember Mr. Skinner. Mr. Nicolson was catechised by him for several successive years.

For the due illustration of the little work—for the idea of which the writer is indebted to William Alexander, Esq., author of "Johnny Gibb of Gushetneuk"—there occurred a difficulty as to an authentic likeness of Skinner. Till quite recently the writer believed that there was not in existence any likeness of Skinner "drawn from the life," but only a sketch made after his death, either from memory or from a person supposed to resemble Skinner. One such "counterfeit presentment" there is now at the Parsonage, Woodhead. Formerly it was in possession of Bishop William Skinner, and visitors at 1 Golden Square, Aberdeen, will remember the portrait of a

rather unpoetically stout and ruddy-faced young man which used to hang above the mantelpiece of the drawing-room, and was generally spoken of as a likeness of "Tullochgorum." The Bishop, however, when questioned on the subject, never failed to explain that the portrait in question was no likeness of his grandfather at all, but only that of a man who *was thought to be like him.* Finding there—at the headquarters of the family—nothing but a mere likeness of a likeness, the visitor not unnaturally inferred that there was not in existence any real likeness of Skinner at all. A juster inference would have been that there was no likeness of him of sufficient merit, as a work of art, to be deemed presentable by his family. This, the writer is convinced, is the true explanation. The portrait, which is reproduced in this volume, appears to be of undoubted genuineness. It has been handed down in the family from generation to generation with a consistent history, and accompanied by a similarly-executed portrait of Skinner's amiable wife. The portraits are now in the keeping of Bishop William Skinner's grandchildren at the Parsonage, Woodhead, Fyvie. Miss Wilson had the history of the portraits from the late Mrs. Booth, Aberdeen, a near relative of Dean Cumming's. "Mrs. Booth was positive in her opinion that the likeness of John Skinner was painted at Linshart, by a travelling artist in return for hospitality, but at what time is

not known." The portraits are painted on wood, in such a humble style of art as sufficiently accounts for their having been kept so long in the background. How far Skinner's is a true likeness of him it is impossible to say. It has an undoubted resemblance to the portraits of both Bishop John and Bishop William Skinner—his son and grandson. The print of Monymusk is from a sketch by the Rev. William L. Low, Largs; that of Linshart from one by the Rev. G. B. Walker, Cruden.

The reader will observe that the date of Skinner's ordination as deacon—a point of some importance biographically, which the writer, in default of specific dates at the time, determined with approximate accuracy in Chap. II. (p. 36)—is set decisively and conclusively at rest in a note to Chap. VI. (p. 122), by an extract from the diary of the Rev. Alexander Lunan, which gives the day and date of the ordination precisely, viz.—Peterhead, August 13th—Ninth Sunday after Trinity—1742.

Some readers may be struck with the anomaly of designating a Dean as merely the Rev. John Skinner. But in Skinner's day "there were in Scotland," as a descendant of Skinner says in a letter to the writer, "no Very Reverend Deans or Lord Bishops." Skinner never seems to have taken the title in any form, nor did he receive it except on official occasions.

ERRATUM.

Page 70 (Note).—For Shemayim read *Shamayim* (assumed by the Hutchinsonians to be a plural form of Shem, = Name).

Emendations since First Issue of Work.

P. 26.—Lunan of Blairdaff—grandson of the minister of Kintore—was not *son*, but probably *cousin* of Lunan of Wartle. (Rev. W. Temple.)

P. 37.—For "augusta" read *angusta*.

P. 100.—For "Arius" read *Arias*.

P. 104.—Mrs. Montgomery, wife of an excise officer, lived at the Feu House, to the North of Ellon, one of the three slated houses which then adorned the place. (Rev. N. K. Macleod.)

P. 171.– For "their" read *them*.

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THE LIFE AND TIMES

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REV. JOHN SKINNER, OF LINSHART, DEAN OF ABERDEEN,

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CHAPTER I.

Introduction—His Claims to Remembrance (1) By his Countrymen at large; (2) By the Members of his own Church—His Birth and Education—Early Proficiency in Latin Verse Composition—Takes his Degree at Marischal College—Teacher for a time at Kemnay, and then at Monymusk—Specimen of his Poems, published and unpublished, composed while at Monymusk—Leaves the Presbyterian for the Episcopal Church.

THE Author of "The Ewie wi' the Crookit Horn," and of "Tullochgorum," "the best Scotch song," according to Burns, "that ever Scotland saw," is a man of more than merely local and denominational reputation. He is an eminent Scotchman, as well as an eminent Scotch Episcopalian. He was also one of those eminent men who are greater in capacity than in performance. He never fully realised "wherein his great strength lay," and thus, to a great extent, he neglected his powers, and misdirected his efforts, and left no adequate memorial of his genius. He had in him a vein of true

poetry, which, if freely worked out in his own native dialect, would have raised him to a high place on the roll of Northern poets. As a writer of Latin verse, too, he was in his own country without an equal in comparatively modern times; but in this branch of literature, to the great majority of his countrymen, his talent is, as it were, "hid in a napkin." Again, there was in him the making of an excellent Biblical expositor and critic—abundance of learning, of critical acumen, of scholarly enthusiasm, and Christian zeal. But the perverse theories and methods of the age grievously obstructed him. In Biblical criticism he often "laboured in the very fire." His great merit is, that he laboured at all in that then much-neglected field.

Such are Skinner's claims to remembrance by his countrymen at large as a poet, scholar, and critic.

(2). When we come to the particular sphere of his own Church, his title to fame is, of course, still clearer and stronger. And it has been always most willingly and gratefully acknowledged, even by men who differed widely from him in opinion. His distinguished, but generally antagonistic contemporary, Bishop Gleig, pronounced him "the brightest ornament of the Scotch Episcopal Church during the latter half of the eighteenth century—one who would have been a very bright ornament of any Church in any century."* He was the central figure of a long and very trying epoch, ever coming to the front, ever ready, when need was, to stand in the breach, or meet the Church's enemies in the gate, and head them back with tongue and pen. He stood at his post through

* See Memoir prefixed to Skinner's Posthumous Works, p. 197.

the whole weary persecution period, bearing aloft the Church's banner, generally drawing on himself the enemy's first fire, and never bating one jot of heart or hope, though subjected to imprisonment (in Old Aberdeen jail), to spoiling of his goods, and burning of his church.

Apart altogether, however, from his own merits and services, it will be found that a full account of the life and works of Dean Skinner is in reality a history of the Episcopal Church in Scotland during great part of the eighteenth century. It throws light upon every important event that occurred in the Church, and every question of deep interest that occupied its attention. It illustrates, as the experience of no other Churchman north or south could do—

(1). The manner of life and the sufferings of the Non-juring clergy under the protracted trials and troubles inflicted by the Penal Acts of 1746 and 1748.

(2). The various expedients to which clergy and laity together were driven in order to keep up the Church services in face of the restrictions of the latter Act, which practically proscribed their public worship entirely.

(3). The eighteenth century revival of primitive rites—known in history as "The Usages," leading to divisions and dissensions which all but split up the little Church, as it did the English Non-jurors,* but terminating in a compromise, which prevails to this day in most of the old congregations.

(4). That peculiar and now forgotten system of

* See Lathbury's History of the Non-jurors, p. 291.—*Seq.*

Biblical interpretation—the Hutchinsonian—which took such firm hold of the Non-juring body, a system which, though based on a mere guess-work theory of Hebrew etymology, was regarded by its enthusiastic advocates as furnishing a key to the chief difficulties of the Old Testament Scriptures, and a conclusive answer to all the cavils of modern sceptics.

(5). The great administrative measures by which the Church was at length raised up from the dust, viz., the Seabury Consecration, the Repeal of the Penal Laws, the adoption of the English Standards, and the removal of all obstacles to assured toleration.

All the above events and movements, with the multiform questions springing out of them, emerge, in the course of the memoir, in some shape or form. Those, in which Skinner was not prominent as actor or sufferer, are handled by him as author. Few things of interest during his long period of literary activity escaped the sweep of his prolific pen, and occasionally, as in the case of the Usages, a return wave of controversy brought past events back within his range. His influence is everywhere traceable, not only so long as his Church has her

> Annals graved in characters of flame,

but long afterwards. The stamp of his mind is on almost everything that issued from the Northern press in the interests of his Church for three-quarters of a century.

Birth and Education.

John Skinner was born at Balfour, in the parish of Birse, a rather wild mountain district in Aberdeen-

shire, about thirty miles from Aberdeen. His father, who bore the same name, was at the time parish schoolmaster of Birse, and was, by all accounts, a very creditable member of a class who have done much for Scotland, and who, by Scotchmen of all classes, especially in the North-east, have ever been held in high honour and respect.*

Mr. Skinner had married the widow of the Laird of Balfour, Mrs. Donald Farquharson (born Gillanders). John was the only issue of this marriage. His mother died about two years after her marriage with Mr. Skinner. Soon after this bereavement, Mr. Skinner, senior, was appointed schoolmaster of the more lowland and cultivated parish of Echt, twelve miles from Aberdeen. There he continued to live and teach for upwards of fifty years, sending up "more young men to the Universities than most schoolmasters" of his day.

He married again a few years after his removal to Echt, and had a numerous family, only one member of which, however, the youngest son James, appears to have lived to advanced years. James became "a writer of some standing in Edinburgh," where he is still well represented by his descendants.

John Skinner was brought up, to the age of thirteen, at Echt, under his father's eye and tuition. The father was a good scholar, and the son was an apt pupil. In those days, and for nearly a hundred

* In general, the salaries of parish schoolmasters in Scotland were, till recently, very inadequate; but this fact seemed to detract but very little from their social standing and consideration. Most of the masters were, in fact, preachers as well as teachers -probationers who made the school a stepping-stone to the Kirk.

years afterwards, apparently the sole requisite for an entrance examination at either of the two Aberdeen Colleges was a knowledge of Latin composition—a translation or version of a passage of English prose into Latin prose. In Mr. Skinner's younger days (1734) the practice of writing Latin verse, for which Scotland had once been famous, appears not to have been as yet altogether abandoned.* Anyhow, he acquired, at an early age, very great facility in the art of Latin verse composition, and he continued to practise the art all his life, with a success not unworthy of Buchanan or Arthur Johnstone.

Skinner entered Marischal College at the age of thirteen, gaining "a considerable bursary" or scholarship. He left it at seventeen, very little above the age at which students generally enter now. Nothing else seems to have been handed down regarding his University career, but it is manifest that, like Bishop Jolly, he had, during his curriculum, acquired a thorough grounding in the classical languages. For a few months after leaving college he taught in the parish school of Kemnay, and from Kemnay he proceeded to Monymusk, where, for a considerably longer period, he acted as assistant teacher. Of his stay at Kemnay there is no memorial, but his residence at the more picturesque adjoining parish of Monymusk was made memorable by the production of a series of lively poems, illustrative of local scenery and events.

* See the specimens of Latin verse quoted in Boswell's Account of Johnson's Tour to the Hebrides, and most probably written by men who were *Alumni* of King's College, Aberdeen—Boswell's Johnson, iv., 297-8. Ed. 1846.

Most of Skinner's youthful poems, indeed, appear to have been written at Monymusk, and to have been due, in part at least, to the lively stimulus and encouragement which the author received from high and low during his residence in the parish, which was probably of longer duration than is generally supposed Only one of these poems, however, the "Monymusk Christmas Ba'ing," has ever seen the light. His son, the Bishop, knew that his father had written, and Lady Grant had "seen some" more "of his poetical effusions in the Scottish dialect," among others, "A Poem on a Visit to Paradise," "a beautiful spot of pleasure-ground on the banks of the Don;" "but of this" poem, he adds, "no copy can be found."*

A copy was in existence, however. A time-stained manuscript, apparently in the author's own neat handwriting, and dated "Monimusk, December 12th, 1740,"† was lately found amongst the family papers. This little book contains not only the poem "On a Visit to Paradise," but also nine other "Songs and Poems on Severall Occasions," prefaced by a rhyming dedication to "The Honourable Lady Grant." The "Christmas Ba'ing" is not included in this collection; and of the whole songs and poems only one is in "the Scottish dialect," viz., "A Pastorall," or dialogue between Sandy and Paty, which sounds the praises of Lady Grant as the "Lady

* Memoir prefixed to Author's Collected Works, vol. i., p. 5.

† If this copy of the poems was written by Mr. Skinner himself, the above date cannot be correct, as he was present at a baptism in Shetland, on December 7th, 1740. See Postea.

Bountiful" of the district. The rest are all in English, and quite in the conventional style of the English poets of the period, abounding in elaborate invocations of the Muses and Graces, and in other like poetic formalities and conventionalities. Pope, the chief living master of the English lyre, is the great exemplar of the youthful bard, and Pope he, in general, imitates with all the fidelity of an ardent, youthful admirer. But, like David in Saul's armour, the youthful bard's muse does not move with ease in Pope's style. The ideas and images are, in general, sufficiently poetical, but in the expression of them there is considerable stiffness, ruggedness, inequality, and lack of finish. Skinner's strong point—first and last—appears to have been humour, or the pathos which lies near to humour; and in these early effusions he seldom writes with freedom and force save when he gives full and free play to his humour.

In his dedication he entreats Lady Grant, while she reads his lines, to imagine the writer "fill'd with a majestick dread!" But should she read with approval, then, he assures her, he would be at once happy and famous:

> Up to the starry orb I'll raise my head,
> And live in registers of fame when dead.

The "Poem upon the Birthday of Miss Nancy Grant" concludes with this valiant convivial resolve—

> We'll blythely sing and stoutly drink,
> And laugh at all dull fools that think.

"The Fruitless Invocation of the Muse, or the

Praise of Belinda," who appears to have been one of the young ladies of the Monymusk family, commences with an invocation to Urania to come down from heaven and inspire his pen "to sound Belinda's praise." Having made this invocation, the poet awaits the result, but by no means with patience. On the contrary, in the excitement of expectation, he lashes himself into a species of Berserkerish frenzy—

> Like one that's drown'd in wine, or raving mad,
> Now I was gay, then on a sudden sad ;
> Sometimes I roared aloud, then sat quite dumb,
> Sometimes I danc'd, then chaft, and bit my thumb,
> As sower, as sullen as an August plumb.
> Sometimes with eyes lift up to heaven I star'd,
> Then scratch'd my head, and fidg'd, and tore my beard !

This frenzied anxiety was not without cause, for when Urania did, at last, appear, it was only to rebuke (at great length) the poet's high presumption in daring to aspire to such a "grand, stupendous theme," one worthy of "my dear Pope," or of "famous Dryden," or Waller. In a poem on a local incident the poet introduces the northern diminutive with somewhat ludicrous effect—

> Say, Mercury, thou pretty, little goddy !
> Since e'er thy speckled wings bore up thy body,
> Say, &c.

The description of Paradise (Monymusk) holds true at the present day, after the lapse of a hundred and forty years—

> Hail ! shady arbours, hail ! delicious bow'rs,
> Where sweet perfumes exhale from blooming flow'rs,
> Where aged trees in sweet confusion rise,
> Lift high their waving heads, and ffan the skies,

While o'er the vale their lofty branches spread,
From noon-tyde rays afford a grateful shade,
Where all things pleasing to the eye appear,
And nature's musick charms the listening ear,
Hither, Thalia, &c.

Another unpublished rhyme, "The Petition of Deaf Maggie Blair," still lingers in the memory of some aged inhabitants of the Monymusk district. It recounts the sorrows and grievances of the heroine or virago, who, through Mr. Skinner's poetical pen, appeals for redress to Sir Archibald Grant, the lord of the manor, showing how—

On Pitfichie's town-loan,
And the lave lookin' on,
I was most inhumanly thumpit.

The petition was probably a mere *impromptu*. In "The Christmas Ba'ing" the author's muse took a bolder, a freer, and a better sustained flight than in any of his other youthful productions. This poem is an imitation of King James I.'s "Chryste Kirk on the Green," a production which the author had learnt by heart before he was twelve years old, and which, in after life, he translated into Latin verse. The subject is a parochial game of football, played with rough vigour and spirit, and much hard hitting, in the parish churchyard, over the rude forefathers of the hamlet.*

The execution is very creditable for a youth of eighteen or nineteen, displaying much humour and graphic power. Compared with that of his other

* Most likely the scene of the "Ba'ing" extended to the north, considerably beyond the present limits of the churchyard.

MONYMUSK.

early poems, the style also is easy, natural, and equable. The description is quite in the heroic style, dwelling chiefly on the marvellous feats performed by some of the more distinguished athletes, and the grievous mishaps endured by the less courageous and skilful, some of whom, like certain of Homer's heroes, betray, when worsted, an almost womanish weakness. The author introduces himself on the scene as "The Insett Dominie," or schoolmaster substitute—

> A young Mess John, as ane might see,
> Was neither saint nor sinner,

but it is only like Johnny Cope to tell the news of his own sudden and grievous discomfiture—

> A brattlin' band unhappily
> Cam' o'er him wi' a binner,
> And heelster-goudie coupit he,
> And reeve his gweed horn penner.

The parish minister fared little better—

> Gleyed Gibby Gun, wi' a derf dawrd
> Beft o'er the grave divine.*

"The Christmas Ba'ing" was probably the only one of the author's early poetical effusions† that was

* See Extracts, Appendix.

† It is not known whether a couple of lost poems of the author's, entitled "Jean's Lament," and "The Dearth o' Sneeshan'," or, more correctly perhaps, a single poem, called "Jean's Lament on the Dearth o' Sneeshan'," ever appeared in print. The writer of the poetical epistle from Portsoy to Mr. Skinner evidently writes as if the supposed two poems were one—

> And Jeannie's case, alack! is mine,
> My patience aft I'm like to tyne,
> When famished box and scant o' corn
> Will scarce afford, &c.

Mr. Skinner's first editor must have taken very little trouble to

published during his lifetime, and as the publication did not take place for nearly fifty years, it may be safely assumed that the poem had been revised and re-touched by him in the interval. He himself sent it to Andrew Shireffs, the editor of an Aberdeen periodical *(The Caledonian Magazine)*, with full permission to print it, if he pleased. It was printed the very month that it was received—September, 1788.*

The poem has always been popular in the North, and probably it would have been more so had its language been less intensely and archaically Scotch.

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ascertain the history and fate of his author's poems. He writes as if he did not know that "The Christmas Ba'ing" had been ever published, saying that it was with difficulty that a copy of the poem, for publication, was found among the author's papers after his death.

* See "Poems chiefly in the Scottish Dialect, by Andrew Shireffs, A.M. Edinburgh, 1790," pp. 336-349. Towards the end of last century, Aberdeen, with Beattie, Campbell, and Gerrard, bulked largely in the literary world. Andrew Shireffs was one of the *minora sidera;* yet, as his poems prove, he was no contemptible votary of the muses. Though a lame bookseller, "slowly hirpling o'er a rung," he was a man of education and taste. Apparently he was editor and proprietor, as well as publisher, of the *Caledonian Magazine and Aberdeen Repository.* In the summer of 1788, after some modest hesitation, he addressed to "The Reverend the Author of 'Tullochgorum,'" as his "father poet," a very respectful and flattering rhymed epistle, in the Scottish dialect, accompanying the epistle with a copy of his pastoral comedy "Jamie and Bess." After some delay, for which he apologised, Mr. Skinner answered his poetic disciple poetically, beginning—

> Dear cripple votary of Parnassus,
> And fav'rite of the Nine sweet lasses!

Mr. Skinner's epistle (dated September 15, 1788), was in English, but in return for "Jamie and Bess" he sent his correspondent his very vernacular "Christmas Ba'ing," of which he says—

> Near fifty years ago I wrote it,
> And to this day have not forgot it;
> So now I send it, and you may
> Dispose of it in any way.

The Aberdeenshire people of even a hundred years ago can hardly have understood it without a glossary. The author seems to have carried his imitation of King James's poem to the extent of echoing its obsolete terms. Anyhow, the poem certainly contains an unusual number of words and phrases which are now rarely, if ever, heard in the North. "Chryste Kirk on the Green," written four hundred years ago, is about as intelligible to an Aberdeenshire man of the present day as "The Monymusk Christmas Ba'ing," written only one hundred and forty years ago.

Joins the Episcopal Church.

It was while at Monymusk that Mr. Skinner left the Presbyterian Church for the Episcopal. This

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As noted in the text, Shireffs disposed of it very quickly. He expressed his thanks and gratification in a second rhymed epistle to Mr. Skinner—

Baith wi' your praise and "Christmas Ba'"
Wow, sir, but you have made me braw.

Again—

Your "Christmas Ba'" has filled a place
Where mony a bonny turn I trace,
And a' gaes aff wi' sic a grace
Throughout the sang;
I wad be baul' to brak' his face
Wha thocht it lang.

With all his respect for his "father poet," Shireffs addresses him in a tone of somewhat unfilial familiarity—

O leeze me on you, canty cock!
Few now-a-days wi' you need yoke
To tell a tale, or crack a joke,
Or sing a sang;
Compared wi' you they're a' a mock
And clean wud wrang.

Shireffs included the three epistles in his volume of poems published two years afterwards.

important step seems to have been largely due to the influence of Mr. Lunan,* the Episcopal clergyman of the place; but, according to an aged and very intelligent member of the present Monymusk congregation, who speaks from family recollections, the first impulse in the matter was Mr. Skinner's own, and was the result of his going one Sunday to the Episcopal church (then at Blairdaff) along with a lady of the congregation, and finding himself attracted, rather than repelled, as he had anticipated he would be, by the

* Mr. Lunan was a son of the Rev. Alexander Lunan, the last Episcopal minister of Daviot, who held his position there till a very late period, and was not evicted without much difficulty. He removed to Wartle, where he ministered to a large congregation, which, after a time, migrated to Meiklefolla or Folla-Rule, where it still meets. Mr. Lunan, junior, preached his first sermon (St. John xii. 35) in his father's meeting house at Wartle, and about a week after (November 9, 1729) he entered on his charge at Blairdaff. The meeting house there was thatched with heather. A copy of Mr. Lunan's Diary and Baptismal Register, for great part of the period of his ministry (1729-1769), now lies before the writer. It is very interesting, showing, like Bishop Jolly's Letters, how large some of the country congregations were at that time. Blairdaff "meeting house" was in the centre of a country district, nearly three miles from the nearest parish church. As the following extracts will show, the congregation numbered at least three hundred communicants :—"March 25, Easter-Day (1733)—Said day the holy sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered to the greater part of ye congregation, but not to them all, on account of the greatness of the water of Don, which kept a good many of them from crossing—administered said day to near two hundred and seventy." "April 1st—Administered to those who, on account of the inconveniency of the Don, were kept back from coming on Easter, being in number about thirty. God bless the people."

The congregation raised large offertories or collections. "April 26, 1730—The above intimate contribution was this day collected, which came to 65 pounds Scots (nearly £5 10s. sterling).

Mr. Lunan received in April, 1744, "a call" from a congregation at Northwater Bridge, or Rosehill, Inglismaldie, Kincardineshire, where

service. However this may have been, the great step was taken with decision, and, of course, it wrought at once a complete change in the position of the promising youth. The parish school, with the parish church in the distance, vanished from his prospect at once and for ever. There was nothing to look to now but a tutorship in a family, to be followed in due time by the charge of an Episcopal congregation, furnishing congenial labour, but only a bare subsistence.

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he remained till his death in 1769. He was succeeded at Blairdaff by a Mr. Morrice. At first the congregation offered Mr. Morrice a stipend which he refused to accept. The Bishop remonstrated. Then after service one day they had another meeting, and, "after serious consideration, unanimously agreed among themselves to give him 234 merks Scots, with a house to live in." "The agreement was subscribed by about fifty of them." Mr. Morrice closed with this handsome stipend of £13 sterling per annum!

Mr. Lunan was buried in the Churchyard of Logie-Pert, where there is a monument to his memory, erected by his sister Ann. "The Rev. Master Alexander Lunan . . . departed this life, 29th September, 1769. Aged 66 years." [Job xix. 26.]

The congregation of Blairdaff is said to have continued large till the year 1801, when it made the great mistake of moving to the village of Monymusk, nearly three miles from its centre, and on the wrong side of the river for the majority of its members. It made another great mistake on that occasion. It did not obtain a site for a church, nor yet secure the rights to any existing building, but fitted up for service a house belonging to the proprietor of Monymusk. The cost of fitting up appears to have been about £40 or £45. The writer used to have in his possession the MS. book containing the list of the subscribers, and the sums subscribed by them for the purpose of fitting up the chapel, in the handwriting of Mr. Forbes, merchant, Monymusk, then clerk of the congregation. The sum raised by the general congregation was a little upwards of £35, which the late Mr. Charles Cay, Shepherds' Croft, Cluny, who had the contract for fitting up, assured the writer sufficed for the fitting up of the body of the building, and the proprietor of Monymusk fitted up his own gallery. The building remains now substantially as it was eighty-two years ago.

CHAPTER II.

Becomes Tutor for one year in the Family of Mr. Sinclair, of Scalloway, in Shetland—Marries Miss Hunter, daughter of the Clergyman of Shetland — Great interest of the latter's Diary and Register, especially in clearing up Mr. Skinner's Shetland History—Returns to Mainland, and reads for Orders at Meldrum, where a seeming drawback becomes to him a positive recommendation—Is Ordained and Settled at Longside—Anecdote of his first appearance there — Begins his Sixty-four Years' Ministry (1742)—Falls under the ban of the Civil Power (1745)—Though no Jacobite, he suffers for the Jacobitism of the Church—His House plundered and his Church burnt down by "The Campbells," egged on by an influential Neighbour.

ON leaving Monymusk, Mr. Skinner obtained, through the influence of the Rev. Robert Forbes, Leith* (afterwards Bishop Forbes), the situation of tutor to the only son of Mr. Sinclair, of Scalloway, in Shetland. The date of this appointment was (his son says) June, 1740, and it will be seen that he was in Shetland a few months later. According to the same authority, the appointment was held by Mr. Skinner only for "about a year,"

* Before proceeding to Shetland, Mr. Skinner paid a visit to Mr. Forbes, at Leith, and was re-baptised and presented for confirmation by him (see *Scottish Guardian*, April, 1865, p. 186). The very strict clergymen of that time not only recommended re-baptism to their converts, but even insisted on it. Bishop Jolly is said to have resorted to a species of gentle violence in order to overcome the reluctance of one member of his congregation (Mrs. Allardyce).

Mr. Sinclair, senior, dying, and new family arrangements rendering the tutor's services no longer necessary. But Mr. Skinner's connection with Shetland lasted considerably longer than a year, and, comparatively short as it was after all, it was, like his brief sojourn at Monymusk, fraught with consequences of deep and life-long interest and importance to him.

Of his tutorship we know little, beyond two facts, both of which are creditable to him; first, that "he quitted with the regret of all concerned the station which he had occupied to their entire satisfaction;" second, that he "wrote a very affecting elegy in English" on the subject of "the early lamented death" of Mr. Sinclair, his pupil's father, "and also a Latin inscription for his tombstone, both of which productions were highly approved of" by Mr. Thomas Ruddiman, copies of them having been printed gratuitously, it would appear, at the press of that distinguished grammarian. Both these facts might indeed have been taken for granted. Mr. Skinner's wit, geniality, and tact must have made his presence a decided acquisition to any family, especially to one living in a remote island. And at no period of his life, early or late, did he ever, when deeply moved by sorrow or joy, fail to give full and free vent to his feelings in verse, Latin or English, or both. He sang very much as the birds sing.*

But the chief interest of Mr. Skinner's Shetland experiences centred, not in his tutorship, but in his

* Ich singe wie der Vogel singt
Der in den Zweigen wohnet.
—*Gœthe, Der Sänger.*

own individual fate and fortunes, which underwent a great and happy change during his brief sojourn there. He crossed the Pentland Firth as Jacob crossed the Jordan, alone and unencumbered, but he returned, like Jacob, "in two bands." After the lapse of nearly a year and a-half from the period of his arrival in Shetland, he married Miss Grissel Hunter, the eldest daughter of the Rev. John Hunter, then the only Episcopal clergyman in the Shetland Islands. The marriage was a love marriage and a poet's marriage. The youthful bridegroom was barely out of his teens, and was as yet without profession or settled appointment, without a house or home, without money or "worldly goods" wherewith to "endow" his bride. It was, in fact, by all the received rules of economics, an imprudent and improvident marriage. But it received the best of all justifications, that of the event. It was a happy union, richly blessed to all concerned, for the long space of fifty-eight years. It should be judged by the result. It would be altogether unreasonable to judge it by the standard of present-day economics. In a matter of this sort, the difference between now and then is such as can hardly be conceived. And nowhere is the difference more striking than in the prevailing ideas as to the economical preparations which are deemed essential pre-requisites to entrance on the responsibilities of the married state. Of these the marriage-meditating priest of those days made small account. That lion in the path of his like-circumstanced brother in these days, the furnishing of a house (of, mayhap, ten or twelve apartments) had no terror for him. At that

time this difficulty may be said to have been non-existent. As a rule, the Episcopal clergyman had no house to furnish. When not living in lodgings, he occupied, almost invariably, a small cottage, with two apartments—a *but* and a *ben**—which counted for furniture a set of very plain fixtures, such as *bound-beds*, *presses* (or cupboards), dressers, and such like. One other difference has to be considered. So great was the scarcity of Episcopal clergymen at that time, that there was no difficulty in obtaining a living of some sort. To the young Shetland couple it may thus have seemed a matter of very small moment whether they married a year earlier or a year later; whether they waited till a living was secured, or made their union sure at once. It was something in those days of slow communication to guard against the risks of

* These are two small but very expressive words, the introduction of which into literary English would probably supply "a felt want," and form a happy instance of "dialectic regeneration." But the meaning would have to be fixed by authority. The writer has repeatedly assisted at lively discussions as to the true meaning of the words, when disputants from adjacent districts of the same northern county were found maintaining with equal confidence diametrically opposite and contradictory meanings, one making the room-end of the cottage the *but*, the other making it the *ben*.

Discussion and inquiries seem to leave no room for doubt as to the accuracy of two conclusions—(1) At the present day, and in the north at least, opposite meanings are attached to the words in different districts; (2) The diversity of usage arises from the fact that, in the prevailing construction of cottages at the present day, neither of the two apartments is properly either a *but* or a *ben*, and it depends on the use to which the respective apartments are put which comes to be called the *but* and which the *ben*. There can be no doubt but that originally the *but* (be-out, bout, but) was the outer apartment; the *ben* (be-in, bin, ben) was the inner apartment. But then the cottages were constructed in a peculiar way. They consisted of only two apartments, the one

separation. And the worst probable consequence of immediate union was the endurance of a brief period of pinching poverty and privation, no very alarming prospect at the worst to a newly-united couple in the hey-day of youth and health, happy in each other, and with the world all before them. "Youth," says Sir Walter Scott, "is an excellent carver and gilder," and no doubt particularly so when the individual is gifted with a poetical imagination. Mr. Skinner, it may be safely assumed, gave himself very little trouble about ways and means. He certainly possessed that indispensable qualification for his office in those troublous times, the power of sitting loose to worldly comforts, and adapting himself to his circumstances, and he quickly had experience of the value of it. As will be seen, it served as a telling letter of recommendation

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opening into the other (see Jamieson, s.v., ben), the door being presumably always in the gable. In a cottage of this sort there could be no doubt as to which apartment was the *but*, and which the *ben*, because, by position, the one was *outer*, the other *inner*. It is different with the cottage of the present day. It has almost invariably three apartments on the ground floor—a room, a kitchen, and a closet between—or a *but*, a *ben*, and a *midhouse*, all three opening from a lobby or passage, the outer door being in the side of the cottage. Here neither of the end apartments is, by position, *outer* or *inner*, *but* or *ben*. And thus either may be *but* or *ben*, according to the circumstances and habits of the occupants, or the custom of the district. (1) If the family usually lived in the room-end, had it well furnished, and saw their friends often in it, then it would naturally be regarded as the inner circle or *ben*-end of the cottage, and so-named. (2) If the family lived almost invariably in the kitchen, rarely having a fire or seeing friends in the room—if, in fact, almost all the life, comfort, and society of the cottage was confined to the kitchen, then the kitchen would be the *ben*, the room the *but*. The writer once knew an excellent, homely farmer who used to say, when he spent a day in the best end of his house—"We're awa' fae hame the day."

to him. Doubtless he had a tough struggle with the world in those early years of his married life. Hitherto this period of his life has been but lightly touched upon. The glimpses which the writer has been able to obtain of it, through old records and traditions, prove that it possesses no little interest. The great difficulty is to determine the period of his final

Departure from Shetland.

In regard to this event, his son, the Bishop, disposing of the period in a few sentences of general terms, and round numbers, conveys, undoubtedly, a wrong impression. He says, in effect, that his father obtained the appointment of tutor at Scalloway in 1740, held it "about a year," then married Miss Hunter, and returned to the mainland, to enter into holy orders, and soon obtained an appointment at Longside. Mr. Reid, apparently following the Bishop, says expressly that he returned "to Aberdeenshire in the summer of 1741," (p. 11).

These erroneous impressions can now happily be corrected by precise authoritative dates. A volume containing Mr. Hunter's Church Register and Diary*

* Mr. Hunter's diary and register form a small MS. volume, which is now in the possession of John Bruce, Esq., of Sumburgh. A copy, taken "exactly as in the original," by the Rev. J. B. Craven, of Kirkwall, now (1880) lies before the writer. It is a very interesting document, illustrating in a striking way the simple, homely ways of the people of the islands in those days. The diary and register are very much mixed up together. Sometimes they are carried on simultaneously, the diary occupying the upper part of the page, the register the lower, a line dividing them. There is no regular division between the register of births and that of marriages, a certain number of

is still in existence, and it proves beyond all doubt that the period of Mr. Skinner's stay in Shetland, whether continuous or not, was nearer two years than one.

His name appears distinctly and unmistakeably in three separate entries of the register—the first occurring about five months after the date of his appointment at Scalloway, the last about two years afterwards. The first entry is under December 7th, 1740, and there "Mr. John Skinner, chaplain to Rob Sinclair, of Scalloway, Esqr.," is given as one of the godfathers of a child, "Grissel Hunter, lawf[1] daur to Mr. John Hunter, Episcopal minister in Zetland," being the godmother. In the next entry he is the central figure. "1741, Sumbroughgerth, Nov. 12th.—Mr. John Skinner, chaplain at house, and Grissel Hunter, law'll daur Mr. John and Christian Hunter, were married." Thus Mr. Skinner had not left even in the late autumn of 1741, nor, as appears by the next entry, can he have left, except for a visit, for a considerable time after.

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baptisms are entered together, and then a certain number of marriages. In general the register omits some of the most important particulars, while it inserts others which are altogether unessential. In the register of marriage there is never any mention of witnesses, nor is the person by whom the ceremony is performed named, except in a general way at the commencement of the register. On the other hand, Mr. Hunter, as may be seen, thinks it necessary to testify of his daughter, even when he merely enters her name as a sponsor, that she is "lawfull." If, however, a child cannot be called *lawful*, what it really is, is made very plain and distinct indeed. The annual number of baptisms, averaging from eight to ten (in one year, 1739, there are seventeen), proves that the number of Churchmen in the islands at the time was very considerable. The diary is still more peculiar than the register. It contains (generally on the left-hand page) entries of contributions to salary, in pounds Scots, or merks, but the word salary is only used

"Nov. 29th, 1742.—Mr. John Skinner and Grissel Hunter had a son baptised, called James. G. F. John Sinclair of Quendal, jun., Esq., Laur. Sinclair, Goab; G. M. Jannet Hacro, spouse to James Forbess, shipmaster in Scaleberry. He was born ye 22nd of Novbr., about 11 at night." In this entry it will be observed that Mr. Skinner is no longer styled "chaplain at the house." His tutorship there had come to an end, and, as will be seen, he must have been for some months in Aberdeenshire in quest of orders and professional employment, Mrs. Skinner remaining with her parents till her husband had a

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apparently in two cases, both recording the contribution of a "grocer or merchant." The usual entry for a contribution of the sort is, "To my encouragement."

Thus—

Quendall, Dr., 1735,
To my encouragement.
From June 15th, 1735, to ditto, 1736 60
To my encouragement for year 1736 60

On the right-hand page Mr. Hunter generally enters his purchases, and sometimes also a payment in kind. These entries seem to prove that in those lightly-taxed times certain luxuries abounded in the islands. Bottles of brandy, rum, wine, ankers of "waters," and pounds of tea, and "lispunds" of butter frequently occur—the lispund being, doubtless, the same as the Swedish twenty pound weight of that name. The earliest entry of any kind in the book is a baptism, Nov. 5th, 1734, the latest, also a baptism, June 9th, 1745. Apparently the interval of about twelve years marks the duration of Mr. Hunter's active ministry in Shetland. From an entry, however, in the "Register of the administration of the Charitable Contributions" of the church, it seems he did not die till October, 1761. His widow had a grant of "six crowns" in 1762, his daughter one of £3 in 1782, and another of forty shillings in 1783.—(Letter to writer from Mr. Craven, Kirkwall.) It is said that he was buried at Connigsburgh, though no stone marks the spot. "His chapel at Lerwick stood below the present parsonage towards the sea. It is now a stable, and had been a square, low-roofed building."

house and home to take her to. This was the natural arrangement in the circumstances; and it is only by assuming the existence of some such arrangement that we can harmonise these Shetland registers with the other known facts and dates of Mr. Skinner's history. Bishop Skinner, in his Memoir (pp. 7, 8), says that his father "entered on his new charge '(Longside)' in Novbr., 1742"—the very month in the end of which his son James was born and baptised, in Shetland. No doubt the Bishop is here correct in his date, which tallies exactly with that on Mr. Skinner's tombstone.* Further, Mr. Skinner must have been in deacon's orders at least for some time, and must also have officiated in the Longside Church probably a good many times before he was appointed to the charge. His son says that it was "at the unanimous desire of the large and respectable congregation" that the appointment was made. The people must have heard him before they desired his appointment.

Some months, then, at least, before November, 1742, Mr. Skinner must have returned to Aberdeenshire and been admitted into deacon's orders.†

* "For LXIV. years and upwards Episcopal Clergyman in this Parish." From Nov., 1742, to June, 1807, there are 64 years and 7 months.

† There is in Mr. Hunter's diary, amongst the entries after 1740, one which the writer at one time thought was intended as an imperfect chronicle of Mr. Skinner's departure from Shetland and admission to the diaconate. It is as follows :—

August 10th, 173 (9) 4.—Mr. John went from Whiteness to Frasserbrough on ye Diligent, Wm. McKino bg Mr. [being master].

August 28th.—Put in deacon's orders.

The date of the year is, on any reading, too early for Mr. Skinner, who had not left Monymusk in 1739—but it was thought that a reference

Reads for Orders at Meldrum.

The following anecdote, referring to the period, used to be told by the late Mr. Grieve, of Ellon, who may have had it from Mr. Skinner himself:—When he returned from Shetland to prepare for orders, Mr. Skinner took a room in the Cowgate at Meldrum, and carried on his studies there in Spartan simplicity, living on homely fare, and mostly ministering to his own wants. Barring fixtures, the only articles in the room, when he established himself in it, were "a firlot of meal and a barrowful of peats, which latter he had wheeled home himself." His whole circumstances, the *res augusta domi*, the cause of the same, the early marriage, and the brilliant talents which no "poverty" could altogether "depress," soon became known to the clergyman at Meldrum—no doubt the Rev. George Walker, grandfather of the Misses Walker who founded the Edinburgh Cathedral—and through him to the Bishop of the diocese. The Bishop happened to speak to Mr. Walker of the difficulty of finding a fit pastor for the important charge of Longside, then

to the original diary might furnish a clue to the correction of the date. It has done so, but with a different result from that which was expected. Mr. Bruce, the owner of the original diary, on being appealed to, has adduced conclusive evidence to prove that the real date of the entry is 1734, and that the "Mr. John" referred to is not Mr. John Skinner, but Mr. John Hunter himself—the diarist. The last figure of the year resembles Mr. Hunter's 4's, but not his 7's or 9's. The entry has every appearance of being older than those preceding and following it, the ink being paler. And "Mr. John" Hunter's ministry in Shetland began in the end of 1734, his first baptismal entry being Nov. 5th, 1734. Besides, Mr. Hunter in his diary never styles himself the Rev. John Hunter, but "Mr. John Hunter." There can be no doubt that the above is a note of his own ordination.

vacant. Mr. Walker replied that a young man had lately come to Meldrum, who had abundant talents and learning for any charge; but he seemed deficient in prudence, having married a wife, without having an income to support her or a house to take her to. "He's the very man for the place," said the Bishop; "he has had experience of poverty, he has learnt to endure hardness, and, with his abilities and experience, he will be able to adapt himself to his circumstances, whatever they may be."

The Bishop's augury was, as will be seen, abundantly fulfilled in Skinner's long, chequered, but eminently successful ministry.

Thus a seeming drawback on the part of Mr. Skinner became to him a positive recommendation. The same thing is said to have happened to him on the first occasion on which he did duty at Longside. On that, as on many subsequent occasions, however, it was his own ready wit and consummate tact that stood him in stead, and converted trouble into triumph. When he first went to do duty in the Longside Church he is said to have looked even younger than the youth of twenty-one that he was. On entering church he passed through a crowd of assembled worshippers, and overheard a woman say, loud enough to be heard by the whole crowd:—"It's surely nae that beardless boy that's gyaun to preach till's!" Taking mental note of the remark, Mr. Skinner passed on, and when he came to the sermon took an early opportunity of turning it to account, delivering a powerful and telling denunciation of the practice of "despising the youth" of a duly trained and accredited

teacher of the faith, as if such a one had not authority to "command and teach." The preacher made no direct allusion to the incident which prompted the extemporaneous rebuke, but the allusion was fully understood, and the impression produced was highly favourable.

Settlement at Longside—Trials.

Mr. Skinner was settled at Longside in 1742, about three years before the outbreak of the last ill-starred Jacobite insurrection (in 1745), and there he remained till about three years after the time (1804) when his Church at last secured entire toleration from the State, by full and complete compliance with the requirements of the Enabling Act of 1792. Thus, it may be said that all but the very commencement and the close of his exceptionally long ministry—extending nearly to the threescore years and ten—was passed under the ban of the civil law of his country. From first to last, though much more menacingly and disquietingly at the first than at the last, ruinous civil penalties hung over him like the sword of Damocles, repressing energy and hindering greatly the due development of pastoral activity and congregational resources. What he did and suffered, and the whole manner and system of the persecution, is written with a graphic pen in his own ecclesiastical history, in his poems, in his letters, and in his Memoir by his son, the Bishop (not, as is sometimes supposed, his grandson), who had not only often listened to his recitals of his trials and sufferings, but had also to some extent shared them. The persecution differed considerably in nature and intensity at different periods.

First Period—Military Rule.

In the first period, reaching to the autumn of 1746, the work of repression appears to have been mostly in the hands of the soldiers. For three months the country was under military law. Parties of soldiers, "out of the reach of discipline," scoured the country with a sort of privateer commission to "burn," wreck, "and destroy everything that appertained to the public worship of the Episcopal Church." Hence, wherever a chapel was found standing apart from other houses, it was burned to the ground, with everything in it; where it was joined to other houses, as in a street, it was either pulled down, as at Peterhead, the congregation being compelled to pay workmen for the purpose, or it was "padlocked for six months,"* or shut up in some other very effectual way. The house and furniture of the clergyman apparently fared little better than the chapel. The clergy, in fact, were treated as if they were belligerents or outlaws. They "were obliged," says Mr. Skinner (History II., 663), "to leave their houses, which sometimes were plundered, and to skulk, where they best could, that they might not fall into the soldiers' hands. Their hearers stood aghast, between pity for their ministers and fear for themselves. . . . All was desolation and dismay among us." "Skulking," and other "stratagems to escape observation," availed Mr. Skinner for a time. He is said to have once baffled his pursuers by "attiring himself in the garb of a miller." (Reid, p. 12.) In order, however, to pre-

* Stephen iv., 325.

vent escape or concealment, the soldiers appear to have chosen "the silence of the night" for their visits. Besides, at whatever time they came they could always do much mischief. The pastor might save himself from them by assuming a disguise or by "skulking"; but his house, his furniture, his family, and, above all, his church, lay at their mercy.

Informers—Chapel Burned—House Plundered.

Final escape was impossible, especially when there was in the neighbourhood a person of standing and influence eager to act the part of informer and prompter. All the traditions of the district agree that this was the case at Longside. A lady "of some rank," belonging to the district, is credited with the initiative in bringing a detachment of Cumberland's troops, "the Campbells," on the Episcopalians both of Longside and of Old Deer, and then exulting over the burning of their churches. By all accounts the victims were taken by surprise. The soldiers came to Mr. Skinner's house either very late in the evening (of July 29th, 1746),* or in the "silence of night." His son, the Bishop, says he had "often heard him tell that on coming home one evenng from performing an occasional office in the way of duty, he found his house in the possession of a military party; some of them guarding the door with fixed bayonets, and others searching the several apartments, even the bed-chamber where Mrs. Skinner was lying-in of her fifth child, and little able to bear such a rude, unseasonable visit." The "unfeeling visitors pillaged

* See Postea.

the house of everything they could carry with them, hardly leaving a change of linen to father, mother, or child in the family." As we shall see presently they carried off valuable papers belonging to Mr. Skinner. The writer omits to notice here what the Longside people never forgot, the fact, namely, that certain local opponents of the Episcopalians took an active part in the plunder. One eye-witness used invariably to justify his use of language of unmitigated severity against the parties in question by saying, "I saw them with my own eyes carrying off Mr. Skinner's books."*

When the present clergyman of Longside, the Rev. Alexander Low, first took up his residence in the place, the traditions of the persecution period were much fresher than they are now. To him the writer is indebted, not only for many interesting particulars, but also for the confirmation of important statements and impressions derived from other sources. The writer adds, "the chapel with all its furniture was destroyed."

The house was plundered in the night. The chapel, it would appear, was not burnt till next day. Several well-attested facts suggest the idea that the burning of the chapel not only took place during the day, but also on a day, and about the hour of the day at which the people assembled for worship.

(1). An elderly member of the congregation of Longside remembers hearing her grandmother say that when she went with her father and mother to the church to service, they found the building surrounded

* The above statement the Rev. Alexander Low had from an elderly member of his congregation, who had in his youth mixed with the survivors of the persecution.

with "wisps" and bundles of straw, collected for the purpose of setting it on fire.

(2). The "lady of rank" who had set the law in motion was there in person presiding over the work of destruction. She "manifested her zeal by riding in triumph round the blazing pile, repeating with great zest to the infuriated band—"Hold in the prayer books!" *

It is hardly likely that the lady would have been present at the burning had it taken place during the night. Doubtless, however, it took place on the same occasion as the plundering of the parsonage, either on the same day, or on the following day, *i.e.*, the 29th or 30th July, 1746.

The chapel at Old Deer was burnt on the same occasion, and both piles could, it is said, be seen burning from the Hill of Coynach, where the lady who had instigated the work, and who could not of course be present at both places at once, eventually took her stand, that she might "enjoy the sight," which she greatly did, "clapping her hands, and exclaiming in words borrowed from Dickson, one of the Covenanting ministers of the former age, 'The wark o' Guid gangs bonnily on!'"—(Letter from Dean Ranken to writer.)

It is very probable that at that date the military period was approaching its close, and the work of demolition had been hastened in consequence. Within the space of about a month, Mr. Skinner could have claimed the protection of the law against such outrages.

* Reid's Memoir, p. 13.

CHAPTER III.

The Toleration Act of 1746—Mr. Skinner anxious to Comply—Obstacles to Compliance—His Letters of Orders carried off by "The Campbells"—No Copy of the Act of 1746 sent to Scotland in time for Registration within the required Six Months—Skinner, with three complying brethren, "Compeared" at the Aberdeen Quarter Sessions, March 3rd, 1747, when the Six Months were just out, explaining their position and petitioning for redress—No definite redress granted—The Church nullified the submission of these Men by making submission a Sin to be purged only by Repentance and Priestly Absolution—Skinner and Livingstone "Absolved by the Bishop, Mr. Gerard"—Intolerance of Church—Intensified Tyranny of State—Penal Act of 1748: this Act far more stringent than that of 1746—It practically proscribed Public Worship—Hence generally evaded—Instances of the common modes of evasion at Longside, Stirling, Brechin, and Ellon—Mr. Skinner's mouth stopped by a "Fool"—Discards the "Paper" in Preaching—Lampoons an influential local persecutor, and also the Fiscal of the County—Is cast into Prison for Infringement of the Act—Effect of his Imprisonment on his Family and Flock—His Son, John, insists on sharing his prison—Kind friends comfort him "in his Bonds"—Appendix, Exhibiting a Connected View of the Trials of a Congregation at the different stages of the Persecution.

The Legal Period—The Toleration Act of 1746.

AN Act had been already passed, laying down the terms on which Episcopal ministers and congregations should be admissible to toleration. Of these terms the most important were, that every clergyman should—

(1) Register his letters of orders by Sept. 1st, 1746.
(2) Take the oaths of allegiance and abjuration.
(3) Pray in church for King George by name.

These terms presented no difficulty to Mr. Skinner nor, so far as appears, to his congregation.

Skinner was no Jacobite. He had not been brought up with Jacobitical sympathies, and he did not apparently see any necessary connection between Jacobitism and Church principles. He seemed to consider himself bound to pay due allegiance to the king whom Parliament and the nation had set over him. His views on this subject were not probably unknown to the plunderers of his house and the burners of his chapel, or, if unknown, they might have been easily ascertained by a little simple investigation. But in this, as in other cases, there was probably an eagerness to destroy, in the belief that if "the nests were pulled down the rooks must disperse." *

* It seemed in general to be a great point with the local opponents of the Episcopalians to have the chapels burnt down. "In the town of Fraserburgh there was then a much more elegant and commodious chapel than they have now (1833). It was ordered to be burned. Lord Ancrum commanded the troops. Lord Saltoun applied to Lord Ancrum, engaged most solemnly that the house should not be used as an Episcopal chapel, and procured in consequence a promise that it should be spared. Lord Ancrum went afterwards *to the manse*, and when he quitted *it*, orders were given to burn the chapel, and it was burnt."—*(Bishop Walker, a native of Fraserburgh, Charge of* 1833.*)* The building might be spared if it could be turned to account by another communion. At Brechin, "Cumberland's soldiers, under the superintendence of a Presbyterian minister, Mr. Blair, tore up the benches of the chapel in High Street," and burnt at the Cross all the woodwork of the interior, together with all the prayer books found in the building. The soldiers were also about to destroy the building, when Mr. Blair requested that it might be spared, as it could be used for the

Mr. Skinner doubtless believed that if he complied with the Act of 1746 his troubles would be at an end. He did therefore comply, and, as far as he possibly could, in due time. His name is mentioned in the *Scots Magazine* for September, 1746, as one of five "non-juring Episcopal ministers who have qualified in terms of the Law Act."* Three of the others also belonged to the diocese of Aberdeen, viz.:—Messrs. Walker, Oldmeldrum; Laing, Poutachy, Keig; and Livingstone, Old Deer. The only other name mentioned is that of Mr. Farquhar, Dumfries. Others may have complied at a later period; but a MS. memoir of the times, which seems a very trustworthy

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Wednesday sermon, for which the kirk was rather large and cold.—*Brechin Advertiser*, Sept. 25th, 1880. As burning down an "Episcopal meeting house" was a meritorious work, so the building of one was a sin deserving excommunication. "Andrew Hunter was a member of the United Presbyterian Greyfriars congregation. He dared to permit himself to be employed to erect the Episcopal meeting house of St. Andrew's, Glasgow, and from an old church minute-book we have the following minute:—"26th April, 1750.—The session, understanding by the moderator and some members of the session that they had conversed privately with Andrew Hunter, mason, a member of this congregation, who had engaged to build the Episcopal meeting house in this place, and have been at great pains in convincing him of the great sin and scandal of such a practice, and the session, understanding that notwithstanding thereof he has actually begun the work, they therefore appoint him to be cited to the session at their meeting on Thursday after sermon;" but the unfortunate builder prosecuted his work, so he was forthwith excommunicated and "denied all church benefit." The church rose in about twelve months. Then went abroad a saying that Alexander Beelzebub was the master mason of the new English chapel; and that Andrew Hunter got Satanic help in his Babylonish work."—Some Scottish Characteristics, *Leisure Hour*, April, 1880.

* Vol. viii., p. 846.

authority, evidently regards the above five as the only compliers.

Obstacles to Compliance.

The difficulty which these complying brethren encountered—first, in carrying out their purpose of compliance, and, secondly, in adhering to it—illustrates painfully the trying position in which they found themselves placed between the Church on the one side and the State on the other. All the four Aberdeenshire incumbents found it impossible to comply with the requirement to register their letters of orders before Sept. 1st, 1746.

The Compliers "Compear" at the Quarter Sessions.

The reasons are given in the following abridged extract from the Diet Book of the Quarter Sessions of the County of Aberdeen:—

"Att Aberdeen, the third day of March, imviic and fourty-seven years, in presence of Sir Alexander Forbes of Fovran, &c., mett at their Quarter Sessions. The said day compeared Mr. William Livingstone, Episcopal minester of Old Deer; Mr. G. Walker, Episcopal minester at Oldmeldrum; and Mr. Patrick Laing, Episcopal minester at Keig, and represented that they were duly qualified according to law, and had recorded their meeting houses as the law directs, and that before the first of September last, and produced their certificates under the hand of the clerk of the shire, for instructing yrof, and likeway produced their respective letters of orders. To witt letters of orders from

George, Bishop of Aberdeen [Bishop Haliburton],* in favour of the said William Livingstone as presbiter of the church. Item. From James, Bishop of Aberdeen [Bishop Dunbar], in favour of the said George Walker, &c., &c., and represented to the saids justices that the Quarter Sessions before which they were appointed to registrate their orders was past before any coppie of the late Act anent Episcopal minesters qualifying and registrating their orders came to Scotland, and therefore it was impossible for them to registrate their orders as the law directs before the first of September last, as no Quarter Sessions intervened betwixt the time of the said Acts coming to Scotland and the first day of September; and therefore as they had done all that was possible for them to do, they required the saids justices to take in their letters of orders, and record them by their clerk as the law directs, &c., &c.

"Like as compeared, Mr. John Skinner, Episcopal minester within the parish of Longside, and produced, in presence of the saids justices, ane extract under the hand of the sheriff-clerk of Aberdeen for instructing that he is duly qualified in the terms of the late Act of Parliament, and represented that one Mr. Hardie, with a party of the Campbells, came to his house on the twenty-ninth day of July last, under silence of night, and carryed off severall pieces of furniture with his papers, and among which his letters of orders were,

* Mr. Livingstone's orders ("as Presbiter of the Church") bore the date of May 25th, 1711, four years before the death of Bishop (George) Haliburton, who became Bishop of Aberdeen in 1682. The date of Mr. Walker's orders was October 28th, 1730, during the administration of Bishop (James) Gadderar, who died February, 1733.

since which time he never saw those letters of orders nor the other papers he carryed off, and upon this he offers to make faith, or to prove the same by witnesses, and therefore as he is willing to have had his letters of ordination recorded, and would have produced them, along with the other minesters above named, if they had not been carryed off in the way and manner above represented, in order to gett them recorded in the termes of Queen Ann's Act of Tolleration; and therefore he craves that he may have the benefite of the said Act, as he could not now produce the said letters of orders, they could not [have] been recorded as the law directs for the reasons above sett forth, and therefore he takes instruments in the hand of the clerk of court. All which being considered by the saids justices, and their meeting being so small at present, and the case somewhat dubious as to the Act of Parliament, they thought proper to delay the consideration thereof till the seventeenth of March inst., to which day they are to adjurn their Quarter Sessions and continue this court till four o'clock this afternoon." Thus Mr. Skinner and his co-complying brethren, from no fault of their own, found themselves, after the lapse of six months from the statutory period of submission, still without complete security as to their position before the law; nor, so far as appears, did the Quarter Sessions ever grant them the necessary security.* Probably they had already done enough to secure for themselves substantial protection from the State.

* The gentleman to whom the writer is indebted for the extract of which the above is an abridgment, Norval Clyne, Esq., advocate, appends to the extract the following note:—"The matter does not appear to have been again brought up before their Honours."

It was not, however, from the State, but from the Church, that they had now chiefly to apprehend risk of disturbance.

Church Makes Compliance a Sin.

The unsubmissive attitude which the Church continued to maintain was destined in no long time entirely to nullify the submission of these clergymen. As a body the Church was still, as in 1688, destitute of adequate machinery for giving expression to its "living voice." Yet there can be no doubt as to its sentiments on the great dynastic question.

The vast majority of bishops and presbyters and many of the leading laity held the doctrine of divine right, and hence believed that not the reigning George, but the exiled James was the true and legitimate sovereign of Great Britain, and therefore that neither Parliament nor people could authorise any clergyman to accept George and abjure James, far less pray in the Church's name for George as his "rightful, lawful king." The Church, in fact, regarded compliance with the Act as a sin—an offence against God and the Church, which could not be "purged" save by repentance and priestly absolution. The complying clergymen were therefore subjected to Church discipline for their compliance. Mr. Skinner and his neighbour of Old Deer submitted. "Livingstone and Skinner," says a MS. memoir of the time, "*repented, and were absolved by their Bishop, Mr. Gerard.*" (Stephen iv., p. 326.)

Skinner's repentance probably amounted to no more than an admission of the ecclesiastical offence of

ignoring the Church's authority in a liturgical question, and a profession of his readiness to submit in this matter his own judgment to the judgment of the Church. There is no proof, but the contrary, that he ever believed that duty to the exiled dynasty required or justified resistance to the will of the nation as expressed through Parliament, or that it was for the interests of the Church thus to identify its cause with that of any political party or dynasty whatever. But as a clergyman he doubtless held that his first duty was to the Church. He owed submission to his ecclesiastical superiors, on whom would rest the chief responsibility for the course that was taken. In this way, he and others no doubt settled the matter with their own consciences, though not, we may be well sure, without great trouble and anxiety of mind. Placed as they were between two fires—punished by the State as Jacobites, and censured by the Church as Hanoverians—the complying clergy were indeed in a trying position. They had a miserable prospect before them, being thus forced into what they must have deemed a needless struggle with a powerful Government flushed with success and exasperated by resistance.

In these days of well-established toleration it will probably be generally agreed that these much-suffering men were on the whole in the right, and both the Church and the State very considerably in the wrong. The Church strained its principles; the State strained its authority. The Church made a religious principle of a political dogma; the State exacted from a Church not in its pay religious services which could not be

rendered without a violation of conscience and an act of hypocrisy.

Without doubt, however, of the two the State was by far the most to blame. Its conduct was tyrannical and oppressive without the tyrant's plea of necessity; for, now that the rebellion was effectually crushed, there was no valid excuse whatever for the demand for extraordinary safeguards, especially from such passive and inoffensive citizens as the Episcopal clergymen, who, though they could not in conscience pray for King George as their lawful sovereign, yet would never have lifted up a finger against him.

The actions of these men in all civil affairs, in fact, were irreproachable, and their opinions could not be changed in a day. Time should have been given them. The intolerance of the Church doubtless tended greatly to embitter the crisis. By leaving the clergy no option in the matter, but making resistance a duty and compliance a sin, it seemed to hurl defiance at the Government. The Government, in its strength, could easily have overlooked this act of seeming disrespect in a small and weak body. And when it did punish it had to its hand abundance of legitimate weapons for the punishment of all classes of offenders in the civil pains, penalties, and disabilities which it could inflict.

Penal Act of 1748.

The weapon, however, on which it chiefly relied, now as formerly, was that of religious persecution, which, on this occasion, it plied with intensified severity. It passed, in 1748, an Act which, in a re-

ligious sense, practically outlawed the whole of the native Episcopalians, for it at once disqualified their clergy and proscribed their public worship. The Act decreed in regard to every clergyman ordained by a native bishop that his orders were not admissible for registration—that any past registration of them was "null and void to all intents and purposes." It prohibited him from performing public worship, or even acting as chaplain in a private family; and it left to him only the right of any other householder, to hold a sort of family worship *in his own house*, limiting the number of his fellow-worshippers to four persons besides his family.

The penalty for the infringement of this Act, as for that of 1746, was "for the first offence, imprisonment by the space of six months," and for the second or any subsequent offence, "transportation to some of His Majesty's plantations for life."

Act too Severe to be carried out with Rigour.

This Act, if it could have been carried out with unrelaxed rigour through every district of the country, would in time have produced the desired effect of stamping out the little Church. But in this country, even a hundred and thirty years ago, it was very difficult after the first outburst of vengeance to ensure the rigorous execution of a persecuting Act. It is said that, in many places during the military period, even the soldiers who were sent to burn and destroy the property of the Episcopalians evinced great repugnance to the work. The civil authorities in general were still more reluctant to put their hand to

the work which fell to them to do, and winked hard at manifest breaches of the Act. But sometimes they were constrained to act against their will. When a person of standing and influence in the neighbourhood lodged a formal information against an Episcopal minister with a magistrate,* the magistrate had no alternative but to act upon it, and such informers were no doubt to be found in many districts where the people were in general not unfriendly to the Episcopalians—some exceptionally dark and fierce spirits, impelled by religious fanaticism, or by ecclesiastical rivalry, or by both together.

Effect of the Act on the Longside Congregation.

To Mr. Skinner and his people the Act of 1748 was probably a heavier blow and greater discouragement than it was to any other pastor or flock in the Church. The congregation was very large, and hitherto it had not been much restricted as to its place and manner of meeting for worship. While Mr. Skinner continued to pray for King George by name, which he appears to have done most of the time that elapsed between the passage of the two Acts,† there was nothing to hinder the congregation from meeting together for public worship in any house that was large enough to hold them. They had no church indeed, but they might, without difficulty, have found a barn or shed, or some

* "And if any judge or magistrate shall be guilty of any wilful neglect or omission of their duty in the premises they shall forfeit the sum of fifty pounds sterling *Toties quoties*."—Sect. xiv. of Act.

† "There can be no doubt of the fact, that for at least two years he had been in the habit of praying for King George by name."—*Stephen's Edinburgh Ecclesiastical Journal*, May, 1833, p. 152.

other unoccupied building capable of containing them. And then, at the worst, they were not driven to have recourse to unsatisfactory and unseemly expedients for maintaining a show of compliance with the law. In fact, this congregation can scarcely be said to have been ever subject to the law of 1746 at all. Without any adequate training in discomfort and inconvenience, it had to submit at once to the very great discomforts and inconveniences of the more stringent law of 1748.

Difference between the Act of 1746 *and that of* 1748.

The difference between the two Acts was much greater than is generally supposed, apart altogether from the fact that the former allowed, and the latter denied a way of escape by qualification. The Act of '48 made it doubly difficult for the clergyman to minister efficiently to the whole of his congregation. By the Act of '46 he might minister to four persons and a family at one time *in any house*, and thus, by going through the congregation, and always officiating in a house where the family was large, he might have at each service ten or a dozen persons. He had at every service a fresh family as a nucleus of his congregation. But, by the Act of '48, the clergyman's ministrations were restricted rigidly to *his own house*, where the family was always one and the same, and where, therefore, he could, in general, minister to his people only *in fours*. He could thus make but small progress however diligently he laboured. The clergyman at Peterhead is said to have performed the service *sixteen times* in one day on one of the great festivals. But under the new law, though Mr. Skinner had performed

the service twice sixteen times in one day he would not have gone over even the whole of the communicants of his congregation. In order to overtake the whole of his flock, he would have required to go on officiating in his own house from morning to night, not simply on one day of the week, but on every day of the seven. And though he himself had been willing to spend and be spent in this way, the people could never have been brought to fall into any such arrangement. In fact, any attempt to discharge their Christian duties in strict accordance with the letter of this law of 1748 would soon have worn out both priest and people.

The Law Evaded.

That therefore happened which in every such case is inevitable. The tyrannical, impracticable law was not obeyed, but evaded. People everywhere fell upon expedients for observing the letter, while they violated the spirit of it. The most conscientious persons believed themselves justified in this course, because they held that the law conflicted with a higher law, and trenched upon the rights of conscience. The expedients to which recourse was had were generally of a very simple nature. No attempt was made for at least two or three years to have service in any house that was not *bona fide* the clergyman's domestic residence.

But the house, being divided into a number of different apartments, offered a ready and obvious mode of evasion. The clergyman, with his family and four other parishioners, occupied one apartment, or the

lobby; the other apartments within earshot were occupied by other members of the congregation. In one case—that of Stirling,* and probably in others—one large room was divided by glass sashes into a number of different compartments, so that, though formally separated, the whole congregation were really in one apartment, and could all see and be seen by each other, and by the clergyman. This device, however, was rather transparent, and probably it was not adopted till the violence of the persecution had considerably abated. The risk of detection became doubtless much less serious after the lapse of a few years, and hence, in some places, the people cleared out a shed or a workshop on Saturday evenings, and had service in it on the Sunday, without any pretence of artificial divisions between the worshippers.

Thus, it seems, was the case at Brechin, as early as 1750, where "Robert M'Kewnie's smithy was every Saturday night swept and arranged for the services on Sunday."† Occasionally, also, "when there was no apparent danger, pastor and people met in the recesses of woods, in secluded glens, and on the sides of sequestered mountains, when the vault of heaven was

* See Bishop Gleig, p. 211.

† The clergyman who officiated in the smithy—the Rev. Alexander Davidson (died 1782)—had charge of other two congregations besides that of Brechin, one at Menmuir and one at Lochlee. There was great difficulty, not only in obtaining any house to meet in, but also in keeping up the common decencies and solemnities of worship. The precentor at the chapel at Lochlee was George Crockit, whose stock of psalm tunes was very limited, and who, when the minister gave out a psalm for which George had not a fitting tune, the latter used to turn round and say—"Try that yoursel', Mr. Davidson."—Writer in *Brechin Advertiser*, Sept. 28, 1880.

their covering, the moss turf their humble altar, and perhaps a solitary seat the pulpit."* Mr. Skinner appears to have adopted, from the first, and to have continued for a considerable time, the most common mode of conducting the service, viz., officiating always in some convenient place in his own house, while the people, according to weather and circumstances, took up a position, sometimes in one place, sometimes in another, within hearing of him. His house at Linshart, which still stands much as he left it,† was by its structure and exposure well suited for a half open-air service, in moderately fine weather. The late Dr. Pratt, who had excellent means of information, describes, no doubt with equal accuracy, both the house and Mr. Skinner's mode of ministration:— "Linshart, the house he occupied for upwards of half a century, is still standing. It is a low, thatched building, in the form of half a square, the kitchen being in the angle, the bedrooms in the north-east arm, and his own sitting room in the south-west." On Sundays "the people assembled in the area formed by

* Lawson's History, p. 302. Occasional offices had sometimes to be performed in the recesses of woods, and always in the strictest privacy. "The Sacrament of Baptism was often administered in woods, and in sequestered places, and the holy communion with the utmost privacy. Confirmations were held with closed doors in private houses."—Lawson, p. 300.

† About ten years ago the walls were raised twenty-seven inches, and the roof was slated. The internal economy of the house, however, is but very slightly altered. Outside, also, it is easy, with a little explanation from the present obliging tenant, to see exactly what arrangements prevailed a hundred years ago. The print at the commencement of this volume reproduces the Linshart of Skinner's days. The garden remains, in outline, the same.

HOUSE AT LINSHART, WHERE REV. J SKINNER (*TULLOCHGORUM*) LIVED.

the two wings outside the house, while he read the service from the window, alike through summer's heat and winter's cold."* No doubt in cold and wet weather many of the congregation, including all the old and frail, were accommodated in some way inside the house.† The discomfort and inconvenience of thus conducting the Church service without a church must, in fact, have been almost intolerable, except in very fine weather. The risk of distracting interruptions and irreverent disturbances of devotion was great and unavoidable, and to the pious worshipper must have been the greatest trial of all. On this point a well-authenticated anecdote speaks volumes, and, in fact, sets the whole period, with its trials, its troubles, and miserable make-shifts, most vividly before us. One day, when Mr. Skinner was on the point of beginning his sermon at a temporary desk, "placed in

* Pratt's Buchan, p. 125. Ed. 1858.

† Sometimes, also, probably "the man with a gold ring and goodly apparel." "The *gentles* were all admitted within, and as many of the poorer people as the place could contain. When the door was opened so great was the rush that, at different times, individuals received injuries from which they never recovered. Nor was this surprising when it is considered that the unfortunate persons, who were condemned to remain exposed to the weather, would often be obliged to sit under a heavy rain, or perhaps plant the benches or stools on which they sat in the snow. Indeed, we have been told that these poor people very often came from a great distance, wading through the snow, and remained to the ankles in it during the whole service."—*Stephen's Edin. Eccl. Journal for* 1833, pp. 197-8. The above is the account of the practice in the congregation of Meikle Warthill (which afterwards removed to Meiklefolla), about the year 1760, when George the Third became King, and the rigours of persecution abated considerably. No doubt, however, it represents a state of matters which had been gradually growing.

the entry," a hen that had got into one of the apartments began to cackle, and when an attempt was made to get rid of her she only became flurried, "took flight, and, darting through the passage," scattered to the winds the unstitched pages of the sermon. So complete was the dispersal, through the combined force of bird and wind, that the attempt to collect the scattered leaves in their entirety, and so as to be available by the preacher, failed. "Never mind them," said Mr. Skinner, "a fowl * shall never shut my mouth again."

To this resolution he stuck firmly through life, discarding "the paper" at once and for ever. And to him with his full mind and fluent tongue this was no doubt a very great and telling advantage, adding unspeakably to the freedom and effectiveness of his delivery, especially in the days of half open-air services. Thus, once again, Mr. Skinner, by his readiness of resource and power of adaptation, quickly turned a disconcerting incident to account, and out of temporary evil brought lasting good to himself and his people. In fact, he proved himself exactly the sort of man the Church stood in need of at this anomalous period, when ordinary methods and resources were apt to fail the pastor at the most critical moment. No unlooked-for or untried thing ever very greatly dis-

* Mr. Skinner, it is said, pronounced the word *Scottice fool* doubtless for the sake of the double meaning. In Scotland such words as fowl and fool afford play to the punster, but they also sometimes bewilder plain people who, finding the pronunciation *fool* disallowed in one case, assume that it is inadmissible in every case. The writer once knew a good, honest man who, in his place in church, always read Psalm xiv. i. thus, "The fowl hath said in his heart there is no God."

concerted him. He always rose to the occasion; always had an expedient suited to each fresh difficulty as it emerged.

His First Publication.

When his church was burned down it was apparently expected that most of his congregation would after a little time seek the friendly shelter of the parish church. To guard against this danger, Mr. Skinner published, in 1746, a tract entitled, "A Preservative against Presbytery," a little work which probably served well its purpose at the time, but which did not apparently approve itself much to the maturer judgment of the writer, for Bishop Jolly mentions in one of his letters to an English correspondent that he had heard Mr. Skinner say that if he had to write it again he would do so in a very different manner.

Mr. Skinner Cast into Prison.

When the want of a church failed to shake the faith and firmness of the people, there was suddenly applied to them the yet more drastic solvent of the want of a pastor. On the 26th of May, 1753, Mr. Skinner was cast into prison at Old Aberdeen. For this blow the people were probably altogether unprepared. It was now four and a-half years since the last Penal Act was passed, and they doubtless believed that, as regarded them, "this tyranny was overpast." The personal loyalty of their clergyman was well known, and would stand him in stead with the authorities. So possibly it would have been had the initiative been left to the authorities. But it was not

so. The same influence that caused the burning of the church availed to cast the pastor into prison. The lady lodged an information against him with the authorities. Doubtless she had made sure beforehand of having sufficient proof of Mr. Skinner's having officiated to more than the statutory number of persons. With the information and the proofs, condemnation was a matter of course. The authorities were bound to act. And Mr. Skinner was too straightforward and honest to set up a quibbling defence. He admitted the fact charged against him. It must be acknowledged that, if the lady was indeed, as all tradition makes her, the moving influence in this second persecution, she had some excuse to offer for herself. She had received provocation.

Lampoons his Persecutor—The Informer.

Her victim had not borne his first persecution with meekness. Like the trodden worm, he had turned upon his persecutor. The priest might submit, but the poet took a poet's revenge. He lampooned the lady in two epistles in verse, written in 1747, in which he represented her as glorying in her work of church-burning and bandying compliments with another noted shrine-destroyer, Jezebel. In 1751, he wrote an epitaph upon her. Neither of these productions can boast of much literary grace or finish; but at the time when, and in the locality where they were written, and where every allusion was plain to every reader, they were doubtless very effective as satires. They appear to have been pretty freely circulated, in manuscript, in the district, and, not improbably, a copy of

one or both of them may have found its way into the hands of the victim herself. If so, we may consider the jail as her answer to the lampoon.

The Fiscal.

In fact, Mr. Skinner, though in his own political views the most invulnerable of the clergy, became particularly obnoxious to the enemies of his Church by such galling attacks on local persecutors. Like Moses in Egypt, he sympathised too keenly with his brethren in affliction to bear to see any of them "suffer wrong," without trying in some way to "avenge" them. The offending lady was not his only victim. He thought that one of the Aberdeenshire magistrates, "David Morice, Esquire, advocate, Procurator-Fiscal for the County of Aberdeen," carried out the provisions of the penal laws with uncalled-for severity, and "about 1750," or three years before his imprisonment, he wrote a poetical address to that gentleman, in which he animadverted strongly on his conduct in the matter, contrasting it with that of officials in a higher station :—

> Your betters, men of greater figure,
> Are not for law in all its rigour,
> Why then shall you appear so hearty,
> Either against or for a party ? *

To remonstrate thus with a Fiscal was, in the circumstances, as daring an imprudence as arguing with the master of twenty legions. And, as has been intimated, doubtless it is to these stinging lampoons that we

* From MS. collection of Mr. Skinner's poems in possession of Dean Ranken.

ought chiefly to look for an explanation of the seemingly anomalous fact that Mr. Skinner, at once the least Jacobitical and the most popular clergyman in the diocese of Aberdeen, was yet, so far as appears, the only one who was cast into prison for doing that which all the clergy did with more or less openness.

Effect of Mr. Skinner's Imprisonment on his Family and Flock.

At first, the imprisonment produced a stunning effect both on Mr. Skinner's family and his flock. The flock's bereavement was, in truth, less capable of remedy than the family's; for the flock could and did minister (in temporal things) to the family, but it was difficult to find any one to minister to the flock in things spiritual. The Longside people were, in fact, stript of all the means and appliances of public worship. They were "as sheep without" either "shepherd" or fold. Yet they betrayed no sign of weakness or wavering, no disposition to scatter and disperse. On the contrary, they kept well together, and discharged with fervent zeal and constancy every remnant of congregational duty. Their pastor could not minister to them except, like St. Paul from his Roman prison, by letter or message; but they did not fail to minister very regularly to him, providing abundantly for his necessities, as well as those of his headless family. Absence appeared only to increase their devotion to him, and strengthen their resolution to cling to him through good report and evil report. Amongst the good people of Old Aberdeen there were also some

who were "addicted to the ministry of the saints," and who visited the imprisoned pastor, supplied him with books, and greatly cheered him "in his bonds."* Nor was he without the solace of constant and most loving companionship. His second son, John, afterwards Bishop of Aberdeen, then a boy of eight years of age, insisted on being allowed to share his father's prison, and would, it is said, have "pined to death" had his request been denied.† His presence brought the kindly air of home and family, and of the hopeful spirit of youth into the dingy prison-house; and thus early did that since distinguished son become his father's great stay and comfort.

In truth, Mr. Skinner had to be thankful for many and great alleviations of his dismal prison lot; but, as has been already seen, he was not a man to rest content with any mere alleviations of an evil, or any merely negative advantages of any sort. He ever strove manfully to extract from the passing evil some positive and lasting good to himself or his people. He did so on this occasion. For several years before his imprisonment he had devoted himself to the study of Hebrew. He now turned to account the enforced leisure and retirement of prison by prosecuting the study with

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* See chapter xi.

† "Mr. Skinner's sons actually believed they never should be permitted to see their beloved father again. From that time John became the most miserable little creature alive. He loathed his food, his sleep forsook him, and he would have pined to death had not his father been permitted to receive him as his companion and bedfellow in prison, where, it was remarked, the boy had not been a week immured when he became as well and as lively as ever."—*Annals of Scottish Episcopacy*, p. 5.

redoubled assiduity, and laying a deep foundation of critical knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures according to the lights of the age.

NOTE.

The Persecution trials, as experienced at the successive stages, by the Churchmen of a single district.

In the scattered notices of the last two chapters, a pretty clear view may be obtained of the trials and sufferings of the Aberdeenshire non-jurors. But a yet more vivid idea of their condition is furnished by a series of anecdotes illustrating the difficulties which were encountered at each fresh stage of the persecution by the Churchmen of one particular district (Ellon and Udny). For these anecdotes the writer is indebted to the Rev. George Sutherland, Portsoy, who had them from the late Rev. Nathaniel Grieve, of Ellon, and certain elderly Churchmen of the Udny district, one of whom (Mr. Sutherland's own father, born 1764), first attended public worship in a barn.

1st Stage—When the rebellion was put down, a body of soldiers were sent to Ellon; but, as usual, they were slow to proceed to extremities with the Episcopalians. The church was allowed to stand. In order to spur them to action, a local fanatic lifted up his testimony, and went about the place day after day, exclaiming, "This hoose of Baal must come doon." The soldiers were at length constrained to destroy the edifice; but one of them, it is said, afterwards meeting the man in a secluded spot, inflicted upon him a severe beating.

2. The next stage found the churchless Episcopalians meeting by stealth, sometimes in one place, sometimes in another, guards being stationed at the different approaches to warn the worshippers of coming danger. The late Mr. Robert Temple (father of the Rev. W. Temple, Forgue, and the Rev. A. Temple, Armadale) used to tell that his uncle kept watch on the Old Aberdeen road. On two occasions, notwithstanding these precautions, the worshippers were pounced upon, and the farmer on whose premises the meeting was held, was fined £10 (Scots ?). Mr. Temple's ancestor was one of the fined. He and the other offender were mulcted at the same sitting of the magistrates. On their way home the two dauntless non-jurors fixed upon a place where service should be held on the Sunday following!

3. At the third stage there was one fixed and constant place of worship, but it was one that had been built for secular purposes, and was used for such purposes through the week. For a long time this pro-church was a barn at Tillycorthie. Here Mr. Sutherland's father first worshipped in public; and he said that for a time the clergyman always took his stand in the kiln, which was separated by a dwarf wall from the body of the barn, in order to keep up the fiction of being in a different apartment from that occupied by the congregation.

4. At the fourth stage, the church people of Ellon district got a humble building erected for them for the express purpose of worship. It was with difficulty, however, that they procured a site. The Laird of Esslemont favoured them; but his wife, "Leddy Hennie," sister of the Earl of Aberdeen, was "a trimmer and a henpecker," and would, on no account, agree to the granting of a site. The people, however, watched their opportunity, and one day, when the lady went from home on a visit, they went to the laird and persuaded him to grant them a site at a ground-rent of £1 per annum at Chapel-hall. When the lady returned home and found out what had happened, she was furious, and threatened to turn every one of the offending farmers out of his place. But the thing was done, and the building went on in spite of her. It had to be made as unchurchlike as possible, however, and in point of fact, it took the similitude of a carpenter's workshop. Such as it was, it served its purpose till better times, when a regular church was built for the Churchmen of the district at Ellon in 1816. Then the humble dwelling was taken down, and its materials employed in the construction of other buildings. It is very unlikely that such a temporary erection had ever been consecrated; yet the good people, to whom it had so long been as "the house of God and the gate of heaven," disliked greatly the idea of its stones and timbers being appropriated to common uses, and they augured badly for the success of such a rash experiment. And the event seemed to confirm their auguries. Mr. Grieve used to tell with significant emphasis that, on one occasion, when he went up to Udny, he found a man roofing his "byre" with the timber of the old chapel, and next time he went up the same man was skinning his cow!

CHAPTER IV.

Adopts the Hutchinsonian system of Biblical interpretation—Nature of the system—A reaction against the Newtonian system of the Universe, and the Unitarian system of Theology—Great attractiveness of the system for Mr. Skinner's imaginative mind—Bishop Gleig's account of his leading mental characteristics—Absence of all corrective in the Biblical criticism of the age—As yet no Science of Philology—His "Dissertation on Jacob's Prophecy"—Argument of the work—Bishop of London presents him with a copy of Calasio's Hebrew Concordance.

The Hutchinsonian Theory.

IT was about this time that Mr. Skinner embraced a system of Biblical interpretation which exercised a powerful and life-long influence on his views and pursuits, and, chiefly through his influence, on the views and opinions of most of the northern Episcopal clergy of the latter half of last century. This was Hutchinsonianism—a philosophico-religious system which originated with a north of England layman, Mr. John Hutchinson (1674-1737), whose works had been republished in a collected form in 1748. There can be no doubt that it was the influence of Hutchinson's writings that led Mr. Skinner, as it led many others, whether friendly to the Hutchinsonian system or hostile to it, to a most diligent study of the Hebrew language. Hutchinsonianism was founded on Hebrew etymology. Its great dogma

was that certain "capital words" of the Hebrew Bible, considered in their root meaning, and apart from the modern and unauthoritative apparatus of vowel points, contained a key to "all religion and all philosophy"—a method for confronting and overthrowing the learned doubters of the day with learning yet greater and deeper than their own—answering them not, as heretofore, by the mere continual repetition of inadequate traditional arguments, or by simple denial and denunciation, but by boldly launching against them a wholly original theory, elaborated with deep learning and patient study from the very roots of the sacred language. It was, in fact, the transition stage between traditional interpretation and scientific Biblical criticism. And though its basis was unsound and fanciful, and its methods of investigation faulty, it did, in an indirect way, some good work in its day. It kept the ball rolling; it stimulated inquiry and paved the way for better things. Like the alchemists, in fact, the Hutchinsonians wearied themselves in the search for an unattainable thing; but in their search they incidentally turned up many Biblical pearls of great price.

The system was a reaction against—

1. The Newtonian system of the universe, which appeared to conflict with the Old Testament cosmogony.

2. The Unitarian system of theology, which claimed the Old Testament testimony on the subject of the Godhead as wholly favourable to its own dogma.

Both of these systems were in different degrees popular with the scientific and literary classes in Mr. Hutchinson's day, and both in different ways seemed

to strike a blow at the faith through the text of the Old Testament.

1. The Newtonians maintained that the early chapters of the Bible contained merely a popular account of the solar system, and one not compatible with a distinct knowledge on the part of the writer of the true and scientific system which, in fact, had been altogether unknown till the recent series of astronomical discoveries which culminated in the Newtonian theory of gravitation—

> Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in night,
> God said, let Newton be, and all was light!

No reasoning of this sort greatly disturbs the intelligent Christian of the present day, who makes allowance for a human element in Scripture, and in general holds the Blessed Spirit responsible only for the Scriptural revelations of divine truth. But in those days it was very different. Almost all Christians took it for granted then that the Holy Scriptures had been literally *dictated*, word for word, from above, and therefore must be assumed to teach the truth in its purest and most advanced form, on every subject on which it touched. It may be imagined therefore with what satisfaction persons holding this theory would welcome the Hutchinsonian teaching, which entirely controverted the Newtonian system, denying the theory of gravitation, and maintaining that the early books of the Bible contained, for those who could sound their depths of meaning, a Moses' Principia,*

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* The Hebrew word for heavens, *Shemayim*, becomes, by the omission of the points, *Shemim*—names; and, according to Hutchinson,

more profound and more accurate than Newton's. The leading principle in the system is that "the stated operations of nature" are "carried on," not by "the assistance of gravitation, attraction, or any such occult qualities," but "by the mechanism of the heavens in their threefold condition of *fire, light,* and *spirit* or *air,* the material agents set to work at the beginning."* Of this principle there was, as has been seen, an intimation in a leading word of the very first verse of the Bible—*Shemayim*—Heavens.

2. In the first verse of the Bible is found also the chief key-word of the theological system—the word for God (Elohim), which Hutchinson, discarding the points, made *Aleim,* deriving it from the verb אלה (pronounced *Alē* by Hutchinsonians) and rendering it the [Three] sworn confederate or covenanted Persons of the one Holy Trinity.

The Three in One appear again in the cherubim, which is a "hieroglyphic of divine construction or sacred image to describe, as far as figures could go, the *Aleim* and man taken in, or *humanity* united to *Deity.*"†

Again, the word *Berith,* usually translated covenant, Mr. Hutchinson construed "he or that which purifies, or purification *for,* not *with,* man." Thus, according to Hutchinson, we find in the very beginning of the Bible distinct etymological indications

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the heavens (*i.e.,* the fire, light, air) were called names to indicate that they were mere emblems, representatives and substitutes for the divine Three in One, Jehovah Aleim.

* Mr. Hutchinson's chief work was entitled "Moses' Principia." It is dreary reading, the style being very loose and rambling.

† See Skinner's Ecclesiastical History, vol. ii., p. 673.—*Seq.*

of the presence and activity of the three divine Persons in the Blessed Trinity ruling and regulating everything, both in nature and grace, according to their several offices. In short, the good man threw out the vowel points and then read into the consonantal skeleton of the earliest record of Revelation, the most spiritual and advanced doctrine of the latest.

How it was that the Theory obtained Currency.

1. The theory had manifest charms for good and pious, but comparatively unlearned, persons, zealous for the honour of Scripture and the integrity of the faith. It invested the Hebrew records with a deep spiritual meaning and purpose in entire accordance with the latest Christian revelation. It made the oldest sacred books wholly harmonise with and corroborate the newest. Then the theory was supported by men of learning and piety, and for men who had themselves no knowledge of Hebrew etymology this fact might well seem sufficient warrant for adopting the theory.

2. Again, this theory carried off their feet well educated and scholarly men, who were of an emotional and imaginative temperament, and took delight in the figurative, the mystical, the allegorical, and the typical. This was in an eminent degree the temperament of Mr. Skinner's mind. In him undoubtedly the imaginative faculty—the *poet*—predominated, and his lively and fertile imagination was ably seconded by his excellent and well-stored memory. Bishop Gleig, who had often held earnest discussions with him on all sorts of subjects, says:—"The predominant powers

of Mr. Skinner's mind were memory and imagination. So tenacious was his memory that he seemed to have forgotten nothing which he had ever read or heard that was worth remembering; and so active was his imagination that, when pressed in argument, it never failed to furnish him with some ludicrous combination of ideas, apparently related to the question at issue, which, if it did not always carry conviction to the minds of the company, was sure to excite their laugh, at least, against his antagonist. His dexterity in this kind of warfare, had he bestowed a little more time than he seems to have done in the study of speculative science, would certainly have made him, what Boswell says Johnson was, *one of the most powerful debaters that ever wielded the weapons of sophistry.*"*

It will be seen from this extract that the Hutchinsonian theory had, from its natural affinities, very great attractions for Mr. Skinner's mind, and further, that once lodged in his mind, the theory became a fixture there, there being always at call abundance of plausible arguments to support it. But further, we must bear in mind the disadvantages under which Mr. Skinner laboured from the elementary state of the Biblical criticism of the age.

There was no critical method in use at that time whereby a difficult question in etymology could be effectually discussed and settled. Not yet, nor for sixty years to come,† was there any science of

* Memoir by Bishop Skinner, p. 194.

† Max Müller fixes on the year 1808 as the date of the origin of the science of language, which he attributes to the publication in that year of Frederick Schlegel's work on "The Language and Wisdom of the Indians."

language. Etymology was mostly mere guesswork. The critics had not yet evolved the "comparative method," whereby a word is traced upwards according to well-known rules, through a whole family of languages, like the Semitic, and through all its changes of form and varieties of meaning, till the oldest form and the original meaning are, by a steady accumulation of proof, placed beyond all dispute.

Moreover, on this subject, all critics and commentators, without exception, were bound fast in the fetters of a false theory.

It was assumed on all hands that Hebrew was the first language used by man;* that all other languages had been derived from Hebrew; consequently that in Hebrew were to be found the roots of all language, and that thus Hebrew was essential to the right understanding of other languages, while other languages could be of but comparatively little use for facilitating the comprehension of Hebrew.

Thus it is obvious that, at that time, it was impossible to expose, with anything like the assurance of demonstration, the unsoundness of any theory based upon Hebrew etymology.

Nor did it become possible to do so till the discovery of Sanscrit had utterly upset all the old theories as to the origin and history of the chief languages of

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* Most Hutchinsonians seemed to accept the Jewish belief (which seems to contradict Genesis ii. 19, 20), that God "*revealed* a full-grown language to mankind," and that there was a "natural and necessary connection between" the Hebrew *words* and the *things* which they represented.—See Farrar's Families of Speech, sect. 1, p. 15, also Chapters on Language, pp. 9, 10.

the world; but that discovery came too late for Mr. Skinner.*

Thus having once taken the wrong way in the great philological question, it was hardly possible that he should come right again; and hence it was that he lived and died "an impenitent" Hutchinsonian.

It must not be supposed, however, that Mr. Skinner ever became, even in Biblical criticism, a mere Hutchinsonian. On the contrary, much of his controversial and expository work is free from any bias of the sort. He was, in fact, too much alive to every passing movement in the ecclesiastical world, and too much taken up with controversy on topics of the day, to be able to devote very much time to abstruse speculation. He had to meet his opponents on their own ground, and fight them with their own weapons.

Dissertation on Jacob's Prophecy.

When in prison, a controversy on the subject of the Jews suggested to him the idea of his treatise on the Shechinah, but the first critical work which he published was "A Dissertation on Jacob's Prophecy,

* Mr. Skinner may have known something of Sanscrit, for a knowledge of it began to be diffused among European scholars from the year 1784, when Sir William Jones established the Asiatic Society at Calcutta. The real discovery of the language, however, dates from the year after Mr. Skinner's death. Then only was its immense value and importance to the science of philology made fully apparent to the world. It is possible indeed that Mr. Skinner may have known all that was reported in his day of Sanscrit, and yet have *disbelieved* in it! When such a man as Dugald Stewart published a pamphlet to prove that Sanscrit was no genuine ancient language, but a modern invention of the unprincipled Brahmins, any amount of incredulity would have been excusable in a country clergyman.

Gen. xlix. 10. London, 1757." This treatise was "humbly offered as a supplement to the Bishop of London's admirable dissertation on the same text."

Dr. Sherlock had published three dissertations at the end of a volume of sermons in prophecy, preached in the year 1724, one of them on "The Blessing of Judah." But "that excellent performance" was never in "Mr. Skinner's hands till some time after these observations were communicated to a friend, and from that friend" he "then had a reading of it." Mr. Skinner's treatise, which extends to 80 pages, might well be termed "an enlargement of Sherlock's." The purpose of both dissertations is the same, viz., to remove a standing difficulty to the full acceptance of the passage as a prophecy of the Messiah, by showing that it was not necessary to assume, as had hitherto been almost invariably done, that it was a kingly and national, and not a mere tribal "sceptre and lawgiver," that were prophesied as not to "depart from Judah till Shiloh came." The royal sceptre departed from Judah at the Babylonish captivity, hundreds of years before the Messiah came. But, as Sherlock maintains, "every tribe had a sceptre and lawgiver;"* and Judah retained its tribal power and organisation through every vicissitude, and gathered to it the fragments and remnants of the dispersed and broken of all the tribes; so that the tribe of *Judah* became the nation of *Jews*, to whom the Messiah came.

In the essential points, Mr. Skinner's reasoning does not differ materially from that of Dr. Sherlock.

* See Sherlock's Six Discourses and Three Dissertations, p. 304. London, 1724.

But he goes much more deeply into the etymological argument, where his Hutchinsonian bias comes into play. He confines his inquiries almost entirely to determining the true meaning of the two words, which are translated "sceptre" and "lawgiver" in the English version. In regard to the former word, his reasoning is sound and sober, and may be said to be conclusive on the question, but the latter word (mehokkek)* offered irresistible temptation to Hutchinsonian refinement, and he labours hard to affix to it the recondite meaning of *typifier*, a meaning which is no doubt etymologically possible, but which is not sanctioned by actual use, and does not harmonise with the simplicity of a patriarchal prediction. His proposed translation of the passage is this, "The tribeship shall not depart from Judah nor a typifier from between his feet till Shiloh come," &c. This translation was, at least, effectual for the purpose. It cleared the way for the application of the latter clause of the prophecy to the Messiah.

This was all that Mr. Skinner proposed to accomplish. He assumed the rest. He, in fact, assumed the only point which a critic of the present day would think requires much proof. "I shall lay down," he says, p. 31, "this first of all, by way of *axiom*, that the principal design is to make a promise of the Messiah, which is by all, by Jews as well as by Christians, acknowledged to be the intendment of *till Shiloh come*."

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* Mr. Skinner makes it *mehokkak*. The Hebrew reader may like to see his transliteration of the whole passage as given by him on the title page of the work :—Lo jasor Shebeth mi Jehuda, ve Mehokkak mebin raglaio, gnad ki jiba Shiloh, velo jikeheth ommim.

No doubt this statement is correct. At that time there were hardly two opinions as to the Messianic character of the prophecy; "Shiloh" was almost universally taken to represent a person,* and as being the subject of the sentence, or nominative of the verb "come;" and Mr. Skinner doubtless thought, as Sherlock did, that the different readings of the word Shiloh in Hebrew MSS., as revealed by the variety of renderings in the ancient versions, such as Jerome's Latin and the Septuagint Greek, were substantially identical in meaning.

Anyhow, Mr. Skinner undoubtedly did the Church good service by helping to clear away even one obstacle to the correct interpretation of an important text, though both he and Dr. Sherlock thought it necessary to apologise for venturing to cast doubt on any part of the traditional interpretation. It was something indeed in those days, though he had done nothing else, to set the Church an example of taking, as he expressed it, "the liberty to consult the original, and interpret for himself."—(p. 80.)

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* Nine years after the publication of Mr. Skinner's dissertation, this general consent was broken by Teller, who (in 1766) maintained that Shiloh is here a *place*, viz., the Ephraimite city where the ark remained so long after the people took possession of Canaan; and that the right interpretation of the three contested words is not "till Shiloh come," but "till he come to Shiloh." Most critics of the present day incline to accept this interpretation, on the assumption, of course, that Shiloh is the right reading of the text. Had there not been diverse readings of the word, there would probably never have been any other interpretation, this being the most natural and simple rendering. (Davidson I., p. 199. *Seq.* Smith's Dictionary, Article "Shiloh.") The word *Mehokkēk*, on which Mr. Skinner bestowed so much learned labour, is considered susceptible of a secondary meaning, which, though

Of course the main interest of a work of this sort is historical and biographical. It presents a reader of the present day with a view of the style of Biblical criticism prevalent at the period, which no mere description or summary of results can supply; and it also indicates very distinctly the progress of the author's own mind, his views, acquirements, and critical method. The little work proves beyond all doubt that Mr. Skinner had already attained in a high degree that intimate acquaintance with the original languages, and with the whole text of the sacred volume, which proved to him through life a tower of strength; but, at the same time, it shows that he had also come under the full sway of that mistaken critical theory which so often turned his strength into weakness, which, like an *ignis fatuus*, enticed him away from the plain beaten path of literal interpretation, to wander and flounder amid the swamps of baseless speculation. Not, indeed, that his Hutchinsonianism greatly affected the main argument of this work. It is rather in

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substantially the same as "lawgiver," yet harmonises better with the corresponding word "sceptre" in the parallel clause, viz., the staff of office, or the ruler's staff. The whole translation would read thus, "The sceptre (or rod of authority) shall not depart from Judah, nor the staff of office from between his feet, till he come to Shiloh, and the obedience of the people be to him." See for a discussion of all the different interpretations of the passage, an "Essay on the Royal Messiah in Genesis," in vol. ii., pp. 189-94, of the Rev. T. R. Cheyne's "Isaiah," London, 1881. Mr. Cheyne holds that however the passage may be interpreted, it is Messianic, and he argues, though not apparently with much confidence, that the conclusion of it may be rendered, "Until he come for whom it (*i.e.*, the dominion) is appointed." This rendering is based on the supposed Hebrew original of the lxx.

digressions* and in subsidiary discussions that these peculiar views crop out, and he justly claims for his exposition that the texts on which his argument is based "will hold the same whether we read the Hebrew with or without the vowel points."—(p. 80.)

The merits of Mr. Skinner's dissertation appear to have been duly appreciated by the scholars of the time. "So highly prized was it by Dr. Sherlock, then Bishop of London, that his lordship presented the author with a handsome copy of Calasio's Hebrew Concordance,"† in four folio volumes, as a token of his regard. It was a very fitting and, doubtless, a most acceptable gift, and one that Mr. Skinner could turn to excellent account.

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* At page 46 Mr. Skinner goes off into a digression of nine pages on the excellencies which characterise the cxix. Psalm, "that masterpiece of sublime devotion and exalted sentiments," in which occurs (p. 47) the following interpretation of Psalm lvi. 10, which forms a good specimen of the purely theological side of Hutchinsonianism, "*Be Elohim ehellel Dabar be Jehovah ehellel Dabar*, literally, in Elohim I will praise Dabar (the word), in Jehovah I will praise the word, *i.e.*, I will praise the word and acknowledge him to be both *Aleim* (God), one of the *Faderati* of the *Trinity*, and likewise *Jehovah* (LORD), self-existent, essence in himself—*A glorious confession of Christianity.*"

† Memoir in Stephen's Ecclesiastical Journal, May, 1833.

CHAPTER V.

Returns to Linshart—No record as to how he conducted service after his return -No sensible relaxation of penal laws till seven years afterwards, at accession of George III., in 1760—Then Episcopalians began to build secular-looking buildings to serve as churches—Mr. Skinner had one such erected near his house at Linshart—His manner of life ; habits, domestic, social, and literary anecdotes—The Farmer and the Earth's motion—The ambitious Tailor—The quondam "Chapel-man"—The censorious Gossip—Grace after meat– Lord Robertson—The Parish minister—Playful rhymes—The over-precise Beggar—An Easter-Day scene at Linshart Parsonage—Mr. Skinner as medical adviser—Anecdotes of Mr. Garden, Stonehaven.

T is not known how Mr. Skinner comported himself in the conduct of his charge after his return from his six months' enforced retirement. Doubtless he walked more warily, and, as far as possible, within the letter of the law. But seven tedious years had yet to run before there came to him or to his brethren in affliction any sensible relaxation of the penal severities. Not till the year 1760, and the accession of the third George—the first of the name who could be called an Englishman, or an English Churchman—did the long-suffering Episcopalians begin to breathe freely. Even then the law was not altered, but it was administered in a milder spirit. Prosecutions were discouraged. All but very glaring breaches of the law were overlooked. Con-

gregations began to meet regularly on Sunday in some shed or other plain building, which was during the week devoted to secular purposes, and was not divided into compartments. After a time, a congregation here and there ventured on the erection of a building, which, though bearing the outward appearance of a shed or workshop, was only used as a place of worship. It is known that Mr. Skinner got such a meeting house erected near his house at Linshart not very long after this period. This building was replaced by a more church-like edifice in the year 1799, but even this latter was, according to a living Churchwoman who worshipped in it, a very rude and uncomfortable structure. The first must have been far more so. Yet, doubtless, the poor persecuted people rejoiced unspeakably in any building which, however mean and comfortless, yet contained their whole number, and sheltered them from the snow and rain!

From this period then—that is from 1760, or a few years later—active persecution seems to have ceased, and Mr. Skinner had still before him more than forty years of a comparatively undisturbed and prosperous ministry. This, therefore, appears to be the fitting place for an account of the whole manner of his life and conversation at Linshart—his pastoral work—his habits, social, domestic, and literary—and his ecclesiastical influence.

His Pastoral Work—Church Services.

As to his mode of conducting the services of the Church, little is known. There was, at the time, no

possibility of any style of service but the very plainest. It was thought much to secure even that, in peace and quiet. Preaching might be good or bad; and almost the only thing recorded of Mr. Skinner's services is

His Mode of Preaching.

This was almost, in the literal sense, *extempore* or off-hand. After "the fowl" stopped his mouth he not only discarded the paper, but also abandoned, if he ever practised it, all lengthy and elaborate preparation for the pulpit. This at least was his practice in his later years, as appears from the account which is given of it by his son the Bishop, to whom it must have been familiar. "In the performance of this *(extempore* preaching), which appears to many a very difficult task, his mode of elucidating the doctrines and duties of Christianity may be said to have been peculiarly his own. So completely was he master of the whole volume of revealed truth, and that not only through the medium of the English versions, but in its original Greek and Hebrew languages, that he no sooner fixed on a subject of discourse (which rarely happened *before ten o'clock on Saturday night)* than every parallel passage, from the Genesis of Moses to the Revelation of St. John, was in view. These passages he first gave to his audience in detail, and should there have occurred somewhat beyond the necessary harmony of doctrine or precept, even a harmony of expression, or, as often was the case, some interesting Greek or Hebrew vocable, which pervaded the whole, that *vocable* he never failed to exhibit in all the

appropriate and edifying lights which Scriptural usage warranted, until even he 'who occupied the room of the unlearned' became, as an apostle says, 'convinced of all.' His discourses on our Saviour's Parables, and on the Epistles and Gospels, and some of the proper Lessons appointed by the Church throughout the year, which were his favourite themes, must live in the recollection of those to whom they were addressed till they themselves have ceased to live." *

The Bishop, doubtless, here speaks of his father's practice, as he himself knew it after experience and repeated exposition of the faith had made preparation for him a comparatively easy task. And preparation for his own pulpit, the getting up of an address to his own "children in the faith," was to him a matter of especial ease and simplicity. Doubtless he could have addressed them in a very effective manner at any time on any article of the faith with the very slightest preparation. This was his own view:—

"When a friend, who had come a considerable distance to see him, observed to Mr. Skinner with what ease and fluency of expression he preached *extempore*, his reply was ready—'Does a man require study and preparation to talk to his own family? Of the numerous congregation which you saw assembled in chapel to-day, I have baptised more than *three-fourths*. I therefore consider them as my children; and surely he feels not as a parent who does not address his children as he feels without awe or restraint.'" †

* Memoir, pp. 206-7. † Memoir, p. 207.

Two years ago there was living in the Woodhead congregation (Fyvie), a man (George Grant, *ætatis* 98), who, like this "friend," went some distance to hear Mr. Skinner, but who was at the time rather young to remember anything but peculiarities of manner. His account (to the present writer) of what he saw and heard was this—"I heard him preach. I dinna min' the text, but his gown (there were nae surplices then) was a' covered wi' yallow snuff; nae rappee, but snuff made from the stalks of the tobacco plant. He carried it in's pouch." Like other preachers* in that age of inveterate snuff-taking (and like Napoleon Buonaparte), Mr. Skinner, it seems, had a leather pocket in his vest, into which, on Sundays, he deposited a supply of the indispensable stimulant, on which he made furtive drafts at convenient breaks in his discourse.

It is to be regretted that such a well-equipped divine did not prepare for the press such a volume of popular discourses as Bishop Skinner refers to—one on the Parables of Our Lord, or on the Epistles and Gospels. Such a work would have been excellently suited for his powers, and it would have been useful

* Preachers in more recent times have, it seems, followed the same practice, though, doubtless, taking greater care to avoid observation; using a darker-tinted stimulant, and conveying it to its destination in a more roundabout way. The late Bishop Terrot, of Edinburgh, was taken aback one Monday morning at an early stage of the Oxford movement by an intimate friend, who accosted him thus—"You're making rapid advances at St. Paul's, I understand, Bishop. Mrs. —— says you crossed yourself yesterday during the sermon." The Bishop looked puzzled and said, "What can the woman have seen?" After a little reflection he exclaimed, "I *have* it; she's seen me taking snuff!"

and popular. It would have done much more to perpetuate his name and influence than his theological and critical disquisitions, which appealed only to a limited class, and had, as a whole, but a passing interest.

Occasional Offices.

In baptising, marrying, and burying the dead, Mr. Skinner does not appear to have used the offices in the English Prayer Book, but adaptations of the same prepared by himself. The adaptation, according to the late Mr. Pressley, amounted in some cases to a very substantial change. The object of it was, without doubt, an accommodation to what Mr. Skinner regarded as the not unreasonable prejudice of the people. At that time many Churchmen in Scotland disliked the Baptismal, and still more the Marriage Service, partly on account of the length of these offices, and partly on account of the occurrence in them of certain archaic expressions (such as "with my body I thee worship"), which are apt to be misunderstood. To shorten the service, and modernise the phraseology, doubtless seemed quite warrantable liberties in those unrestricted times. (See Note to Chap. VI.)

Catechising.

According to his son, Mr. Skinner was "particularly assiduous in catechising the young members of his congregation at those stated periods which the practice of the Church has long set apart for that purpose." And these instructions were prolonged to a late period in the lives of the catechumens. The rule

was that they should attend "till they had passed their twenty-fifth year." It was a humorous stroke of policy to fix the limit at that age. Some young unmarried persons dislike the shady side of twenty-five, and Mr. Skinner used to say that "the lasses were very regular in their attendance" on his catechetical lectures not only up to twenty-five, but sometimes even to thirty.

Domestic and Social Life.

The ballad of "Tullochgorum" is an index to Mr. Skinner's views of domestic and social duties. Therein he inculcates, with catching spirit and force, the value of kindly social intercourse and recreation in promoting good feeling, in scattering gloomy thoughts, and sweetening "sour and sulky" tempers; and doubtless the genial author learnt in enjoyment what he taught in song. He was himself the life and soul of every party at which he was present. And in the earlier days of his ministry he was probably present at rather many.

In those days it was considered a great point to secure a clergyman for a social gathering, partly as a practical protest against the gloomy, Puritanical notion that there was something inherently sinful in the song and the dance, and partly as a check on the excessive indulgence in drink, too common at the time. The latter was a perilous service, indeed, to ask of a clergyman. It was putting him to "vile uses"—"casting a Moses into the mud," at the great risk of his becoming "a sacrifice rather than a priest."*

* Dr. South.

It is said that at one time Mr. Skinner, from the great request he was in on account of his social qualities, stood in some danger of being carried off his feet in this way. But, on the risk being brought home to him by some of his clerical brethren, he broke off from the perilous habit, and greatly curtailed his convivialities. To the last, however, he was moderately convivial and eminently hospitable. His cottage at Linshart was famed for its hospitality. It was the resort of all persons in the neighbourhood, who could appreciate "plain living and high thinking," and who had in them something of "the sense and mirth and wit" which the host held in such high account.

"Many a bright and happy company met within the walls" of that cottage, says Mr. Reid, "presenting a pleasant contrast to the general austerity of the times; people could be 'cheerful, brisk, and keen'* even in those days at Linshart." The host was always lively, amusing, and instructive. He was equally at home and at ease with the learned and cultured, and with the plain and homely. He could speak on any subject, and in either dialect, Book English or Buchan Scotch. He could talk of bullocks or of Hebrew roots. He was equally at home in discussing a knotty point in history, in theology, in classics, in politics, in farming, or the topic of the day whatever it might be. He could argue with a guest by the hour, and when argu-

* Cheerful, brisk, and keen,
In spirit lively, in apparel clean,
With proper feelings, and sufficient spring,
Good faithful subjects of their God and King.
—*Unpublished poem of Mr. Skinner's.*

ment became useless or worse, he could effectively rally and banter. Mr. Reid gives an amusing instance of this rapid change of front. "A good, honest farmer had been spending an hour with Mr. Skinner on one occasion when the conversation happened to turn on the motion of the earth. The farmer would not be convinced that the earth moved at all. 'The earth,' he maintained, 'never gaes oot o' the pairt, and it maun be that the sun gaes roon', for we a' ken that he rises in the east and sets i' the west'; and then to silence his opponent he put the following question:—'If the sun didna gae roun' the earth, fu is it said in the Scriptures that the Lord commanded the sun to stand still?' 'Ay,' responded Mr. Skinner, in his own quiet way, 'it's very true that the sun was commanded to *stand still*, and there he stands *still*, for he never was commanded to take the road again.'"*

The Ambitious Tailor.

In a similar way Mr. Skinner is said to have silenced a somewhat conceited tailor, who came to consult him in regard to a project which he had come to cherish of giving up his secular business, and seeking admission into the ranks of the ministry. Not believing in the man's fitness for the ministerial office, Mr. Skinner laboured hard to dissuade him from his purpose, but all in vain. He at once therefore

* The late Rev. Robert Lessel, of Inverurie, who died some twenty years ago at the age of 97, had, it seems, as much difficulty as Mr. Skinner in instilling the Copernican theory into the minds of his parishioners. One farmer said, "Mr. Lessel says the earth gangs roon' the sun; but the sun was i' the muck hole o' oor byre at Lammas, an' he's there *yet*."

changed his tack, and by way of preliminary test, propounded to the tailor a semi-theological, semi-sartorial, and altogether insoluble problem regarding the dimensions and measurements of the angel who "stood with one foot on the land and one foot on the sea." The tailor was mystified and bewildered, and Mr. Skinner bade him go home and master his own trade before attempting the study of his one.

Sarcasm—The Quondam "Chapel-man."

Though in general his wit and banter were good-humoured, Mr. Skinner could, on occasion, be sarcastic. A man said to him one day, with an air that Mr. Skinner did not like, "*I* was eence a chapel-man (an Episcopalian) mysel'." "Na, ye only *thocht* it," was the rejoinder.

The Censorious Gossip.

One day a woman represented to Mr. Skinner that unless he did a certain thing "folk would be speakin' aboot him." "Neen readier than yoursel', goodwife," said he.

The General Thanksgiving.

In Mr. Skinner's day, and long after, the custom of saying inordinately long graces, ranging over the whole field of theology, prevailed very largely in Scotland. The intention, no doubt, was good, viz., to seize the opportunity of putting in a word in season; but too often the word became a harangue, which, however excellent in itself, was altogether out of season, and did not edify, but irritate. Many anecdotes are told of the impatience manifested on such occasions,

especially when, as in the case of stage coach passengers, the time allotted for dinner was very limited at best.*

Mr. Skinner, with his keen sense of humour, could not fail to be struck with the incongruity of this practice, and he appears on one occasion to have given expression to his feelings in a somewhat original way. At a public dinner at some place in the Buchan district, the parish minister, in saying grace before dinner, became very discursive, touching upon almost every topic that was in any way pertinent to the occasion. Mr. Skinner was asked to return thanks after dinner, and he became equally comprehensive. He repeated, in fact, the General Thanksgiving in the English Prayer Book from beginning to end! The minister, it is said, not recognising the form, remarked that he did not "think the body had it in him."

The Lord's Prayer.

A Presbyterian neighbour arguing with Mr. Skinner against the frequent repetition of the Lord's Prayer in the services of the Church, summed up his

* The late Lord Robertson, it is said, on one occasion, when saying grace for the passengers at an inn, held on, of set purpose, with a fervour that no one dared to interrupt, till the signal was given that the coach was about to start. To interrupt was indeed dangerous, if the following anecdote which the writer has often read is true :—A party of divinity students, proceeding to Aberdeen by coach, stopt to dine at an inn. The student who said grace was so lengthy that one of his fellow students admonished him of the flight of time by touching the back of his hand with a hot potato. This interruption was, it is said, deemed so unseemly and graceless an act, that the perpetrator of it was expelled from the divinity hall. Such things were at least possible at one time.

objections more pithily than reverently, saying—"Ye mak' a dishclout o' 't." "That," retorted Mr. Skinner, "is just what we do and what we should do," and then he went on, in words which are very differently given in different versions, to show that, as being the model and divinely-prescribed prayer, the *Pater Noster* was introduced into every service* of the Church in order to direct and guide and regulate all the merely human prayers.

Mr. Skinner and the Parish Minister.

Mr. Skinner appears to have been on very friendly terms with Mr. Brown, the parish minister of Longside. One day, when Mr. Brown had been engaged in something which he knew that Mr. Skinner disapproved, he came up to the latter, and shaking hands with him, said—"Excuse my glove." "It 's maybe the honester leather o' the twa," said Skinner. Mr. Brown predeceased Mr. Skinner, and when the latter was asked in what part of the churchyard he should like to be buried, he said—"Lay me down beside Mr. Brown; he and I got on very well together during life."

Playful Rhymes.

Mr. Skinner playfully mystified his juvenile grandson, John, afterwards Incumbent of Forfar and Dean of Dunkeld, by a pretended prophecy of Thomas the Rhymer:—

> The world shall four John Skinners see;
> The first shall teach a school,
> The other two shall parsons be,
> The fourth shall be a fool.

* The fact that there are at least three services combined in the ordinary morning service of the Church, lends some colour to the charge of vain repetition.

He employed his muse in after years in making fools of John's opponents. Before settling at Forfar, the fourth John Skinner removed for a time from Montrose to Banff. He had not long left Montrose when he learned that a report was current there that his chief motive in going to Banff was the prospect of the good living enjoyable in that northern town, which then, it seems, had, like Yorkshire, a great reputation for its hams. In high indignation, Skinner naturally, but not very wisely, sat down and penned a long and circumstantial denial and refutation of the injurious report. He showed it to his grandfather, who said it was much too long and serious, and taking pen and paper, he speedily produced the following quatrain, which he said was more the style of answer suited to charges of that sort :—

Had Skinner been of carnal mind,
As strangely ye suppose,
Or had he e'en been fond of swine,
He'd never left Montrose !

Anecdotes like the above, varying somewhat in the details, though always agreeing in the point, circulate to this day freely in the Buchan district. They, at least, witness powerfully to Mr. Skinner's reputation for wit and geniality, and must be taken into account in forming an estimate of his character. Very probably, like other men, Skinner said many good things which have been lost, and has been credited with some which he never said. The following is probably an instance of the latter class :—

The Over-precise Beggar.

It is said that Mr. Skinner one day gave a beggar woman sixpence, and the woman, in gratitude for this

unusually liberal alms, expressed her hope that he might "go to heaven that verra nicht." "Thank you, Janet," said he, "but you need not have been so particular as to *the time*."*

Hospitality to the Members of his own Flock.

Courteous and hospitable to all, Mr. Skinner was particularly so to members of his own congregation, some of whom lived at a great distance from Linshart, and when they came to consult him on week-days, or to attend church on the great festivals, when the service was long, stood in need of some refreshment before returning home. In these hospitable entertainments he found a most willing and efficient helpmeet in Mrs. Skinner. On Easter-Day there appears to have been provided at the parsonage an entertainment—somewhat in the style of the *Love Feasts* of the early Christians—of which almost all the members of the congregation partook, and to which most of them had sent contributions of provisions. It is thus that the pastor's son describes what he must have often witnessed:—

An Easter-Day Scene at Linshart Parsonage.

"The good people of the congregation never failed during the preceding week to pour in upon the much-loved spouse of its venerable pastor such a quantity

* The writer, when the above story appeared in print, asked the late Bishop William Skinner as to its genuineness. The Bishop said the story was a favourite one of his grandfather's, but that it was not his grandfather but a Miss Russell of Aden who gave the sixpence, and returned the witty response to the beggar woman, whom, he added, she met in the village of Stewartfield.

of provisions as employed the housemaids for several days in preparing for the expected guests. And no sooner was the morning service of the festal day concluded, than every room of the house was filled with people from the chapel, to all of whom, without distinction, the utmost attention was shown, and plain substantial fare of every kind distributed by two or more persons in each apartment. At this sober and serious entertainment, it is needless to say what mutual love and harmony prevailed, and in what veneration all present seemed to hold the occasion of their thus assembling, as well as the worthy pair under whose roof they were assembled. The countenance of the entertainer, when with brimful eyes he went from room to room welcoming his people, and wishing them all the spiritual comforts of the season, bespoke him to have 'put on bowels of mercies, kindness,'" &c.

As Medical Adviser.

Mr. Skinner's usefulness in the district was considerably enhanced by his knowledge of medicine, which he had studied (chiefly under the eminent Dr. Thomas Livingstone, of Aberdeen), in order that he might be able to give *gratis* advice to his poorer neighbours.

It was highly desirable in those times that a country clergyman should have some skill in medicine. There were so few medical men in the rural districts that the poorer classes had seldom a chance of timely relief from a regular practitioner. The clerical practitioner, though but moderately skilled, could in most

cases administer at least temporary relief; and in critical cases he could urge, with authority, the duty of calling in a regular practitioner. Mr. Skinner appears to have possessed considerable skill. Anyhow, the people believed in him, and, according to his son, he laboured "in season and out of season" in his medical as well as in his clerical capacity. "To relieve distress of every kind, as far as he was able, seemed to be his greatest delight. When he heard of a neighbour being sick or afflicted in mind, not only were his favourite studies instantly laid aside, but even his bed was frequently forsaken. In these labours of love he appeared to disregard his own health—exposing himself without hesitation to cold and rain, and midnight hours; and when his anxious family would endeavour to dissuade him from running such hazards, his constant reply was that 'He who had made his frame *robust*, had surely made it so for some good purpose.'"—(p. 203.)

NOTE.

A good many of the clergy of those days appear to have had a smattering of medical skill. Some of them were duly qualified practitioners. This seems to have been the case in the early part of this century with both the clergymen of Stonehaven—Messrs. Memys and Garden. The latter practised largely amongst the poorer members of his flock, and generally introduced the young into the world and the Church at one and the same visit. William Officer, Esq., S.S.C., Edinburgh, remembers having often as a boy seen Mr. Garden, and heard many anecdotes of him from the older members of his family, all highly creditable to Mr. Garden, and calculated to remove entirely the unfavourable impression which a perusal of Bishop Gleig's letters leaves on the mind regarding him. (See Bishop Gleig, p. 285, *seq.*) Mr. Officer thinks Mr. Garden was the son or grandson of the patriarchal

Peter Garden, of Auchterless, who died in 1775, aged 131 years. "He was either a surgeon, or trained originally to the medical profession, and he practised among the poorer members of his congregation, even attending them in child-bed. One woman, I know, was indebted to him for his services on such occasions no fewer than thirteen times! His practice was to administer the rite of baptism on those occasions, on the same day, to the newly-born child, particularly when the family lived at any distance from Stonehaven. Mr. Garden had," Mr. Officer says, "some peculiarities, but they did not in any degree interfere with the efficient and acceptable discharge of his ministerial duties." One of his peculiarities was his great fear of dogs. "He was much afraid of dogs, and carried a staff of more than ordinary length for his protection." His memory is still revered in Stonehaven. Mr. Officer spoke of him to an elderly person there lately, and the response was "Oh, aye! Mr. Gair'n was terrible weel liket!" He "stood in great dread of Bishop Gleig." The Bishop had formed a prejudice against him, and altogether miscalculated the strength of his influence with the people. He thought Mr. Garden "the worst reader he had ever heard;" but what seemed very bad reading to the Bishop was probably very good reading to the people, most of whom doubtless read very much in the same way themselves. Mr. Garden, it is likely, retained his native Doric unaltered.

Mr. Officer adds an anecdote characteristic of the men and the times. At Stonehaven as elsewhere in the north it was customary at a Confirmation service to read the 8th chapter of Acts instead of the second lesson for the day. Mr. Garden was about to do this on one occasion "when Bishop Gleig roared from the altar—'Stop, Garden, you are wrong. Read the proper lesson.'"—(Letter to writer from Mr. Officer, Jan. 14th, 1879.)—Bishop Seabury studied medicine as well as theology before he was ordained.—(See his Life by Dr. Beardsley, p. 5, *seq.*)

It is said that sometimes on Sundays, when Mr. Garden was closely engaged in his double professional capacity at the house of a distant member, there was no service in church, and the beadle gave intimation of the cause, in somewhat ambiguous and, to strangers, rather unintelligible terms.

CHAPTER VI.

His habits as a literary man—Manner of composition—Hours of study—Supply of books—Leases a farm—Composes "Tullochgorum," &c.—Controversy with the Rev. Norman Sievwright—Mr. Sievwright's "Principles"—Irregular Consecrations—The "Usages."

His Habits as a Literary Man—Composition.

HIS habits as a literary man are well known from his own letters and the statements of his biographers; and they are in thorough keeping with his general character. He wrote in the rapid, off-hand style. It has been seen that the preparation of his Sunday sermon (which was not written) was usually deferred to the last two hours of the last day of the week. His writings, both in prose and verse, appear to have been put into shape much in the same hurried way. As a rule, he either dictated or wrote down his thoughts as impulse prompted or as opportunity offered, and then dismissed them from his mind, only in rare cases subjecting the work to patient and careful revision.

"His poetical effusions were committed to writing just in the form which his fancy gave them, and when once dismissed from his thoughts, were never called back to receive any sort of correction or improvement. The dress in which they first appeared from his pen was that in which they were destined to make their

way as far as the circle of his acquaintance extended." (Works, vol. III., p. 121). His editor contrasts this practice with that of Burns, who acknowledged that "the work of the file in giving his poems the finishing polish was often the greatest labour that attended the production of them." It is to be regretted that Mr. Skinner did not in this particular follow Burns' example. His poems are very unequal, and most of them bear marks of haste and want of finish.

What we are told of the composition of his poetical works may be assumed in regard to his prose writings. In general these have both the merits and the defects of hasty compositions.

His Hours of Study.

Generally these were the latest hours of the night. The light of his study window is said to have served, throughout the late hours, as a land-mark to his neighbours passing to and from Longside. And when this, its secondary use, was pointed out to him, Mr. Skinner is said to have taken the utmost care to ensure its efficiency, never permitting any blind or curtain to be put upon the window to obstruct the light. Nay, it is said, he never "retired to rest with comfort while there was a chance of any human being traversing the Long-gate" — or road leading from Linshart to Longside. He comforted himself with the thought that though his light might be of little use within, it was of undoubted use without. "My taper," he used to say, "never burns in vain; for should it fail to cheer myself and family, it never fails to cheer some roaming youth or solitary traveller, since the

pole star itself is not truer to its position than is the Linshart candle, its rise and set, true to the Buchan hind."

His Supply of Books.

His library at Linshart was contained "in a closet five feet square."* But its contents were apparently valuable and well selected, including some of the Fathers, and certain most useful books of reference, such as Calasio's four-volumed Concordance to the Hebrew Bible — the gift of the Bishop of London —Arius Montanus, &c.† He did not apparently read much from public libraries, but he turned to the best account every opportunity that presented itself of reading from well-stocked private libraries. The following is the account which he gives of his method of reading in a letter to his grandson, William, then a student at Oxford :—"I will tell you my method since ever I understood anything about books. When visiting any neighbour possessed of such a library as country gentlemen might be supposed to have, I took down in writing what I thought worthy of notice in any book that came in my way, and collecting the most material of these various extracts into a common-place book, I could have recourse to it as often as I found occasion for such a reference. You know the

* The library is now converted into an entrance lobby. The dimensions are fully as limited as Mr. Skinner represents them to be.

† With a few of the Fathers, the oldest and best,
And some modern extracts picked out from the rest ;
With a Bible in Latin, and Hebrew, and Greek,
To afford him instruction each day of the week.
—*The Stipendless Parson.*

extent of my library, contained as it is in a closet of *about five feet square.* Yet I believe I may say without vanity that there are few who have published so much (whether valuable or not is out of the question), with so few books in their possession. My commonplace books, through fifty-seven years, and the blessing of a most tenacious memory, have been my storehouse, and from their contents I have done what, once on a day, I could never have expected to do." (Memoir, p. 112.)

Reading in this systematic way, Mr. Skinner, with his "tenacious memory," read to some purpose, and, notwithstanding the irregular and casual nature of his supplies, he did certainly, during his long life, amass and assimilate a perfect storehouse of knowledge. The want, however, of ready access to a large public library, containing the best and most recent authorities on every subject, was a great and undoubted disadvantage to him as an expounder of subjects demanding deep investigation and research. This disadvantage concurred, with the unscientific methods of the period, in rendering his Biblical disquisitions comparatively barren.

Such were Mr. Skinner's literary habits and equipments. For upwards of six years, however, at this time, there was little fruit from them. Instead of cultivating his mind, he devoted himself for that period to an unsuccessful attempt to cultivate the earth.

He takes a Farm.

In the year 1758 he took the farm of Mains of Ludquharn, which then belonged to Lord Errol. It

lies near Linshart, which residence was apparently still retained by him. Many of the clergy of those days took to farming. To most of them it was the only available expedient for supplementing the slender salary. To some of them however—Mr. Skinner for one—it only made bad worse. To him it proved a losing and embarrassing speculation, which, after a weary struggle of nearly seven years, was given up "in disgust." In a humorous poetical epistle to a friend, he dilates pathetically on his trials and troubles as a farmer.* Literature would have been a better crutch for him, as he himself came to see. He wisely concluded to

> Sell corn and cattle off : pay every man ;
> Get free of debt and duns as fast's I can ;
> Give up the farm with all its wants, and then,
> Why, take me to the book and pen.

It is very probable that, had our author had recourse to "the book and pen," instead of the farm, he would even in those days have found remunerative employment, notwithstanding his distance from large libraries and great intellectual centres. In fact, as will be seen, he was at a later period pressed by the editor to become a contributor to the *Encyclopædia*

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* You can't imagine how much I'm distrest,
There's not a day that I enjoy rest,
Except on that blest day, the first in seven,
That day appointed as it was in heaven !
Then I'm myself : for when the gown goes on
I'm no more farmer then, but Pres'ter John.
The folks with pleasure hear me sermonise,
And once a week I'm reckoned learned and wise ;
The pulpit brings me into people's favours,
And Sunday screens from creditors and cravers ;

Britannica. And writing for the press, under editorial guidance, he would almost certainly have devoted his talents to more suitable subjects than he usually selected, and also have given to his contributions a more elaborate finish.

Writes "Tullochgorum" and "The Ewie wi' the Crookit Horn."

The seven years of farming were not intellectually altogether years of famine. Very little indeed was produced, but what little there was, was of first-rate quality. It is to this period that his biographers assign the composition of "The Ewie wi' the Crookit Horn," and "Tullochgorum" is probably also due to it, though nothing certain seems to be known of the period at which the latter was composed beyond the fact that it preceded "The Ewie." Anyhow, these two lyrics are the finest and most finished specimens of Mr. Skinner's muse. And no doubt their superiority is in some degree attributable to the fact that in the case of each of these masterly ballads Mr. Skinner was to some extent under the sort of literary guidance which it has just been assumed would have been of

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But Monday comes, of course, and then begins
A new week's penance for the last week's sins.

Thus farm and house demands come on together,
Both must be answered, I can answer neither;
I put them off till Lammas, Lammas comes,
Our Vestry meets, and I get in my sums;
The half-year's stipend makes a pretty show,
But twenty ways poor fifteen pounds must go;
Scarce one night does it in my coffers stay,
Like Jonah's gourd that withered in a day,
First come, first served, with me is still the way.

undoubted service to him in most of his works. He was asked to write both the one and the other by a friend, whom he took pleasure in obliging, and to whom he would not have cared to send home an unfinished and unworkmanlike production. The friend who suggested "Tullochgorum" was a lady—Mrs. Montgomery—whose name has, by this happy suggestion, been saved from oblivion. Her house stood, it is said, "in the north-east area of the village" of Ellon, where the girls' school now stands.* Mr. Skinner and some of his clerical brethren spent a day with this lady on one occasion when a Synod, or some other diocesan meeting, was held at Ellon. In the course of the day a discussion arose on some political topic, and threatened to wax hot. Whereupon Mrs. Montgomery, with feminine tact, changed the subject by remarking on the want of suitable songs for certain excellent Scottish airs, and asking Mr. Skinner if he would write a song to the tune of "Tullochgorum."† Mr. Skinner agreed, and the result was "Tullochgorum," "that most excellent ballad," which, as Burns says, "gratified the lady's wishes and the wishes of every lover of Scottish song." Mrs. Montgomery practically struck the key-note in "Let Whig and Tory all agree," and Mr. Skinner kept it well up through the entire ballad, the spirit of which is excellent—hearty, kindly,

* Smith's New History of Aberdeenshire, vol. i., p. 531.

† "Tullochgorum" is in the Lowlands always pronounced Tillygorum. Mr. Skinner pronounced it so, and wrote it so when he wrote phonetically, as in his "Answer to an Epistle from Portsoy":—

What though some saqe o' holy quorum
Should lightlie me for "Tillygorum,"
I'll never steer my sturdy for him, &c.

and brotherly, exhibiting a rare union of "sense and mirth and wit."

"Tullochgorum" established Mr. Skinner's reputation as a song writer, and had he, like Burns, in his later years confined his literary efforts chiefly to the production of songs, it cannot be doubted that his reputation as a poet would have stood much higher than it does.

"The Ewie wi' the Crookit Horn."

The other friend who urged Mr. Skinner to write a song was the famous Dr. Beattie, author of "The Minstrel," and Professor of Moral Philosophy in Marischal College, Aberdeen. The professor, as a poet of mark, had been asked to write a pastoral song, and had made the attempt, but in this, as in another case, had stuck at the end of the first verse.*

> The ewie wi' the crookit horn,
> Sic' a ewe was never born,
> Here aboot nor far awa'.

These three lines Beattie wrote and sent to Mr.

* There can be little doubt that it is to no want of ability, but rather to a certain Donnish fastidiousness that we are to attribute Beattie's failure to write in the Scottish dialect. It was the same sort of feeling that prompted a master of the Aberdeen Grammar School, forty or fifty years ago, in making an intimation to his class regarding the statues of Burns' Tam O'Shanter and Souter Johnny (then being exhibited in Aberdeen), to speak of the two thirsty worthies as "Thomas of Shanter and Shoemaker John." Nothing could be finer than the *other* pastoral verse which Beattie wrote :—

> Oh, bonny are our greensward howes!
> Where by the birks the burnie rows,
> And the bee bums and the ox lows,
> And saft winds rustle,
> And shepherd lads, on sunny knowes,
> Blaw the blithe whistle!

Skinner "as the best qualified in Scotland," with the request that he would write a song to suit the tune. Beattie, like Mrs. Montgomery, simply struck the key-note for the poet, who kept it well up, in this case as well as in the former, through the whole ballad, dwelling with touching pathos, subtle humour, and rare felicity of expression on the signal merits and the lamentable fate of the poor "Ewie," the great grief and indignation of her disconsolate master, and still more disconsolate mistress, who, it was feared,

Would never win aboon't ava'.

The "Ewie" has always been highly popular, taking rank amongst its author's productions next to "Tullochgorum." Some prejudice existed against it at one time, from the mistaken notion which prevailed that the "Ewie" was no veritable flesh-and-blood sheep, but a whisky still! The notion, doubtless, originated in the fact that the song was set to a Highland tune called "The Whisky Still." It is now averred on the best authority* that "the heroine was a real character."

Controversy with a "Qualified" Clergyman.

Mr. Skinner now undertook a task which, though probably not very congenial to his taste, was yet much more in the professional line than either farming or song-writing. This was the defence of his Church from a very intolerant and uncalled-for attack by a qualified Episcopal clergyman, the Rev. Norman

* See Chapter xii. The vexed questions as to the origin of the "Ewie" have, as will be seen, been all set at rest by the testimony of the author's grandsons and grandnephews, who had repeatedly heard the true account from their parents and grandparents.

Sievwright, of Brechin. Mr. Sievwright was, like Mr. Skinner himself, an Aberdeenshire man. In fact, he was probably an old pupil of Mr. Skinner's, being a native of Monymusk, where he was born in 1728,* and thus must have been a boy of eleven or twelve years of age when Mr. Skinner taught in the parish school there. Unlike Mr. Skinner, however, Mr. Sievwright was of Jacobite and apparently also of Episcopal descent. His grandfather, a native of Perthshire, is said to have fought for King James at Sheriffmuir, and to have consequently been deprived of a small landed property which he possessed. Norman was probably converted to Hanoverianism in England, whither, most likely, he betook himself after completing his education at Aberdeen,† and where he is said to have

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* At the Boat-house. His father is said to have been keeper of the ferry-boat, which at that time plied, not as now, at the point where the present Inverurie road crosses the Don, but a short distance above Monymusk House. See Life of Rev. Norman Sievwright, with relative correspondence, in *Brechin Advertiser*, February 15, 1881, and in subsequent numbers—said to have been written by a living descendant of Mr. Sievwright's.

† Mr. Sievwright writes himself M.A. in the title page of his "Principles, &c.," but in the controversial correspondence in the *Brechin Advertiser*, already referred to, it is maintained that there is no proof of his having ever graduated at any English or Scotch University. Had he been an English graduate, he would doubtless have added to the M.A. either *Oxon.* or *Cantab.* He probably had a Scotch degree, though the record of the fact may have been lost. Anyhow, he was by no means deficient at least in professional learning, and he sought to turn it to account. Besides his "Principles," he published in 1764 "a small book on the Hebrew punctuation." He "also left behind him five manuscripts in the form of completed works," the chief of which was a controversial legacy to his Non-juring opponents, viz., "A Supplement to the Ecclesiastical History of Scotland, demonstrating the

been ordained by the Bishop of Durham when about twenty-one years of age. He was appointed to the charge of the qualified congregation at Brechin in the year 1749 or 1750. Here he enjoyed full and complete toleration. But there was a fly in his ointment. He and his fellow-seceders from Jacobitism obtained, it seems, no credit in the country for true Hanoverianism, nor for any higher principle of action in complying with Government than a prudent regard for their own worldly interests. "Of all the friends of this happy Establishment," he says, "none have been more ungenteelly used than the authorised [*i.e.*, the tolerated] Episcopal clergy *in Scotland*, as if they complied with the law more from *compulsion* than *principle*. To sit silent under this I think sinful and injurious to a good but sadly misrepresented cause." * To sit silent was not necessary. On the contrary, Mr. Sievwright would have done a good work had he put forth a calm and temperate defence of the position of the qualified Episcopalians. They had more to say for themselves than their Non-juring brethren were willing to allow, and it would probably have helped rather than hindered the cause of re-union to have had it well and temperately said. But for a temperate defence Mr. Sievwright was not the man. With him defence took the form of attack. He put forth his elaborate treatise, "Principles: Political and

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Schismatical and Uncanonical character of the Scottish Episcopal Church." One at least of his descendants has returned to this Uncanonical Church, Mr. Colin Sievwright, Forfar, author of "Rhymes for the Children of the Church"—a very meritorious little work.

* "Principles: Political and Religious," &c., p. 12.

Religious,"* to prove, not that his own principles were good, and that he deserved his toleration, but that the principles of the Non-jurors were so bad that they deserved no toleration at all. And this, too, at a time when toleration was beginning to be understood, when the Government had for seven years been discouraging persecution of the Non-jurors, when wiser counsels had begun to prevail within that distracted body itself, and when the obvious duty of every Anglican Churchman of whatever class was the exercise of mutual forbearance, charity, and tolerance.

Mr. Sievwright's "Principles."

Whatever the principles of the Non-jurors might be, they could hardly be more erroneous and reprehensible, according to present-day notions, than some of Mr. Sievwright's own. He had not apparently the remotest idea of the duty of toleration, and a more unmitigated Erastian probably never breathed. With him the civil magistrate was all supreme. Even although a Pagan, he had a right to implicit obedience on the part of ecclesiastics, and in case of their resisttance, he had authority to deprive them not only of jurisdiction, but even of office.† Accordingly, Mr.

* "Principles: Political and Religious, or a Preservative against Innovations in Politics and Religion. By Norman Sievwright, M.A., a Presbyter of the Communion of the Church of England, as by law established, and minister of the authorised Episcopal congregation in Brechin." Edinburgh, 1767, pp. 324. 12mo.

† "Had these Bishops [Timothy and Titus] refused to include [in the number of magistrates to be obeyed] the *Roman Emperors* and all *inferior magistrates* acting by and under *their* authority (as established

Sievwright argues that the civil magistrate had a right to refuse toleration to the Non-jurors on account of the unsoundness, not only of their political, but also of their religious, principles. Their doctrine was not sound, therefore they ought not to be allowed to teach it. They had no authority to teach. They were only "pretended ministers." No one could be a true and "authorised minister" who refused "dutiful allegiance towards our Princes of the Protestant line of the blood-royal established upon the throne of *Great Britain*." "Resistance of the Protestant succession . . . invalidated all right to spiritual jurisdiction," &c.

Irregular Consecrations.

Mr Sievwright had more colour for his contention when he argued that, on account of the glaring breaches of Church law perpetrated by the "Usagers" in their contest for supremacy with the College party, the then existing Non-juring clergy had not even on their own principles any valid orders at all, but were mere laymen. The consecrations of their Bishops were "mock consecrations," having been performed in direct violation of the express laws regulating consecrations, and in defiance of the "solemn protestations" of the majority of the Bishops constituting the College, who pronounced them "null and void." No doubt, according to strict law and canon, there was much force in this argument. The "Usagers" Bishops kept

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by the voice of the Roman *Legislature*), according to the spirit and doctrine of our anti-revolutional Bishops, I verily believe the *Roman* Emperor could have justly deprived them of their offices, though he never did or could consecrate them," &c. (pp. 145-6).

up their own number, and at length triumphed over their opponents by a series of most irregular acts. The consecration of some of their leading Bishops, such as Rattray and Dunbar and Keith, were "most irregular and uncanonical." But this was the utmost that the College Bishops said of them. In their eyes they were null in law but not in fact, and they were capable of being made legal on due submission by the parties to the College of Bishops. Of even the worst case it might be said—"*Fieri non debuit factum valebat.*"

The Usages.

Probably in Mr. Sievwright's eyes the main proof of the Non-jurors' unfitness for toleration was their doctrine, especially as indicated by "The Usages." The Usages were the result of a primitive and Eastern revival, begun by the English Non-jurors, and enthusiastically adopted by the Scotch, particularly by those of the north-eastern district. The introduction of the Usages began, roughly speaking, about a quarter of a century after the Revolution, when disestablishment became complete and final. Bishop Gadderar, of Aberdeen, was the chief agent in the introduction of the Usages. But for him and the clergy of his diocese they would never have made much way. The clergy of the north-east had been distinguished for ecclesiastical learning in the time of the famous Aberdeen doctors. Burnet says they continued to be so in his day. They were at least well qualified to appreciate a "historical religion." Nevertheless, there can be little doubt that both the Usage movement itself and the

learning by which it was mainly supported, were from England. The Scotch Episcopal clergy were too poor and depressed to have the necessary means and appliances for research and publication. They consulted their English Non-juring brethren, and made free use of their books.* There was much need of a revival of some sort, and circumstances greatly favoured this revival.

Ritual had been almost wholly neglected or suppressed during the period of Establishment, and since then the Bishops, as a body, had set their faces against all changes, even the most necessary, because of the abeyance of the "legitimate" Sovereign authority. This ritualistic, or rather ceremonial revival, however, could not be resisted, especially as it was coupled with a revival of regular diocesan Episcopacy. By the end of another quarter of a century it had wrought the entire extinction of the opposition or College party;† and in the preamble of the Canons of 1743 it was declared that the Concordates, by which

* A typical instance of the latter practice was the free way in which the compilers of the "Lesson Catechisms" drew upon the large work of Dr. Deacon (see Deacon's Catechism, second edition, 1748, pp. 74, &c.) Except, however, in the Lessons on the Eucharist, there is no very close following of Deacon. In other lessons his teaching is greatly modified. For example, Deacon inculcates both exorcism and unction before baptism, explaining both ceremonies. The writer is indebted for his reference in this case to the Rev. J. R. Leslie, Buckie, author of a "Catechism on Confirmation." The circumstances of the English Non-jurors were favourable to learning. When they were expelled from their livings many of them retired to Oxford, where they had every facility for study and research. It used to be said that the streets of Oxford were paved with the skulls of Jacobites.

† Bishop Ochterlonie, the last of the College Bishops, died in 1742.

the two parties had bound themselves — including that of 1731-2, by which the Usages were prohibited —were "vacated," in consequence of the Bishops being now all "perfectly united in one and the same mind." It was now the end of a third quarter of a century. Mr. Sievwright and Mr. Skinner* were still battling over the Usages, but the controversy was really external to the Church, and had reference to the past rather than the present.

The Usagers as a party had triumphed, but it is certain that the Usages, which had been the great bone of contention, viz., Prayers for the Dead, and the Mixed Cup, though tolerated to some extent, had now no regular and definite ecclesiastical sanction. Mr. Skinner (Letter, p. 78) refers Mr. Sievwright to the Scotch Communion office for proof that the Church was not responsible for even such a modified form of Prayer for the Dead as that with which he charges the Usagers. The only tangible difference between the prayer for the Whole State of Christ's Church in the English and that in the Scotch office was the omission in the title of the latter of the words "militant here upon earth." The reference to the faithful departed was much the same in both prayers, and in both it was assailed by "the enemies of set forms" as a prayer for the dead. But though disclaiming responsibility for the Usage, Mr. Skinner nevertheless does stout battle in its behalf. Probably had he been cross-questioned on the subject by his confident opponent,

* "A Letter to Norman Sievwright, M.A., in Vindication of the Episcopal Clergy of Scotland from his Charge of Innovation in Politics and Religion. Aberdeen." [No date or author's name.]

he would have answered as Dr. Johnson once did, "Sir, I am not defending this Usage, I am only answering your arguments." And certainly some of his answers, whatever they may be as arguments, are very telling as retorts. "Where do we find praying for the dead commanded in Scripture?" asks Mr. Sievwright. "Where do *you* find it *forbidden?*" retorts Mr. Skinner.—(Letter, p. 76.)

Mr. Sievwright's "oracle," Mr. Dundas, calls the practice "the ancient usage of prayers for the dead." Mr. Sievwright calls it an "innovation." "Can an *ancient* usage be an *innovation?*" says Mr. Skinner. Again, Mr. Sievwright argues ("Principles," pp. 207-8) as if the kingdom for the coming of which we make petition in the Lord's Prayer is the kingdom of Christ. "It is the kingdom of the Father," says Mr. Skinner (Letter, p. 73) "that the words themselves express." "Our Father . . . Thy kingdom come." Christ's kingdom is already come. The coming of the Father's kingdom will be the ending or the "consummation" of Christ's kingdom.

2. The Mixed Cup was doubtless practised pretty generally at this time. It was not enjoined, but permitted or tolerated. Mr. Sievwright himself admits the "antiquity of this innovation." "It has," he says (p. 211), "antiquity, universality, and consent on its side." But he maintains that it is not "essential to the Eucharist." He himself "had no objections against using it for any purposes for which it was ever used." The Usagers made it essential, and this was "a corruption." It was difficult, after such admissions, to resist the argument that there was nothing very

dangerous in such a practice, and it might at least be tolerated. "Whether it be essential or not," says Mr. Skinner, "I may at least ask if you can prove it essential to *lay it aside?*"

3 and 4. It is unnecessary to notice the discussion of these Usages. No. 4 is substantially the same as No. 1. No. 3, the Prayer of Invocation, introduced after the words of institution, has always been regarded by the advocates of the Scotch office as the main glory and distinction of that formulary, presenting as it does an insuperable barrier against mediæval error.

No doubt Mr. Sievwright makes some strong points against the Usagers which Mr. Skinner fails to rebut, as, for example, their very equivocal interpretation of the Concordate * of 1732. But no errors of

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* It seems impossible to acquit the Usagers, or at least certain of their number, of disingenuous conduct in regard to the first article of the Concordate. No doubt the article is vague in its terms, but Mr. Sievwright maintains that the Usagers drew it up so purposely, or by "a Jesuitical fetch," in order that they might evade it. The article stood thus :—"That we shall *only* make use of *the Scottish* or English Liturgy in the public divine service, nor shall we disturb the peace of the Church by *introducing* into the public worship *any of the ancient Usages* concerning which there has *been lately a difference among us*," &c. To one who knows the controversy which the Concordate was framed to settle, this seems a pretty clear though not a very precise general agreement to give up all the causes of quarrel—

1. Not to make use in the public service of either the English Nonjurors' Communion office (of 1718), or of the pen-and-ink adaptations of King Charles's office, but *only* to use the English or the "Scottish Liturgy," *i.e.*, the Liturgy of 1637, known as the Scottish Liturgy, and of which an edition had lately been printed for use in the Church, or at least the Communion office in said Liturgy.

2. Not to practise in the public service any of the ancient Usages

this sort could invalidate their orders or disqualify them for toleration. This will be admitted on all hands now. And in fact to us the controversy has little beyond a mere historical interest. It throws light on the principles and practices and the mutual relations of the two Episcopal communions in Scotland in the middle of last century. It shows how, parted at first only by political causes, they gradually became

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which had lately been a cause of dissension, the chief of which were the Mixed Cup, and Prayers for the Dead. It soon appeared, however, that the Usagers made little if any difference in their conduct of "the public service, but continued their practice of the Communion Usages much as before." The other party protested strongly, and it appeared as if, instead of concord, there would soon be, as Dr. Grub observes, "an entire separation between the two parties."—(Grub, iv., p. 10.)

The Usagers in self-defence urged three different pleas—

1. The argument which Mr. Skinner adopts in his Letter (p. 108, *Seq.*), and in his History (ii. 667), that the sanction of "the Scottish Liturgy" implied the sanction of the Communion Usages, as those Usages were substantially contained in that office. That the Church or the contending prelates had themselves no understanding of this sort is proved by the terms of the Concordate or Formula of 1724, in which, though the Scottish or the English Liturgy only is enjoined as here, the Mixture and the Prayers for the Dead are expressly forbidden —(Lawson, Appendix, 526.)

2. As the unaltered "Scottish Liturgy" was thus hardly admissible, it was assumed that the Scottish office permitted in the Concordate was not the original office, but said office as altered by the Usagers themselves by pen-and-ink insertions and transpositions. This assumption certainly gave the requisite latitude. Practically the office became what each clergyman chose to make it. But if this was the true interpretation, what was the office or the offices which were by implication excluded when *only* the Scottish or the English were permitted? It can hardly be supposed that, with permission to use their own form of the Scottish Liturgy, the Usagers would have cared to introduce even the English Non-jurors' office, as certain of them desired to do in the year 1731. But there is a still clearer proof that it was not the Usagers' own form, but the original form of the Scottish Liturgy

alienated and estranged by theological odium and mutual rivalry. Probably the only appreciable effect of Mr. Sievwright's attack was to widen the gulf that separated them. It was too late in the day to rouse the Government to any fresh act of intolerance against the Non-jurors. The Jacobite scare was over, and the party in power "cared for none of these things." It was equally hopeless to excite any strong

that was permitted in the Concordate. This restriction to the use of "only the English or the Scottish Liturgy" does not occur for the first time in the Concordate of 1732, but appears in every document of the sort during the previous twelve years, with every indication that it was the original and not the adapted office that was intended. Certainly then the assumption that the sanction of "the Scottish Liturgy" in the Concordate implied the sanction of the two vexed Usages does seem to be, as the College party maintained it to be, wholly unwarrantable. Equally unwarrantable was the twin assumption that the ancient Usages forbidden in the Concordate were only those connected with the occasional offices—"Immersion in baptism, chrism in confirmation and for the anointing of the sick." There is no evidence that any of these Usages ever caused any "difference;" not one of them is even named in Concordate or Formula. Nor does it seem likely that any attempt was ever made to introduce any of them "into the public service." More probably, judging from the instances mentioned in the letters of the period (Scot. Eccl. Journal, ii., 246), these Usages were performed only in private "without witnesses," nay, with every precaution for excluding witnesses, and ensuring secrecy.

3. But perhaps the best proof that these pleas were weak is the fact that some of the Usagers urged a third and wholly different one —one to which the wording of the Concordate (though the same as that of previous Concordates) seemed to invite them, viz., that they were not *introducing* the Usages, but only continuing them. Mr. Sievwright gives, as his authority for the use of this plea by the Usagers, the following quotation from a letter of Bishop Freebairn's to Bishop Ochterlonie, of date July 17, 1732, a few months after the signing of the Concordate:—"That they shall not introduce any of the ancient Usages into the public worship of God, for that they are already introduced."—("Principles," &c., p. 285.)

feeling against the little Church amongst their Presbyterian fellow-countrymen. Time had mitigated Presbyterian prejudices, and brought home to most thinking minds some conviction as to the duty of toleration. Further, the controversy, obscure in itself, was probably regarded by most Presbyterians as merely a quarrel of Episcopalians amongst themselves regarding their own formularies. And Mr. Sievwright was not the man to invest the subject with interest. His style was heavy and cumbrous, presenting a striking contrast to that of Mr. Skinner, which was simple, racy, lively, and idiomatic. Still further, every one must have seen that it was the past, not the present against which Mr. Sievwright chiefly directed his attack. It was not so much the existing Non-jurors as those of thirty years before whom he arraigned at the bar of public opinion. But time had wrought its inevitable changes on the Non-jurors. Jacobitism and Usagism* were dying out. By the end

* The Usage movement appears to have run its course without much effectual check from law or authority, yielding at last to the slow influences of time. The amount of recognition which the two most vexed Usages—the Mixed Cup, and Prayer for the Dead—eventually secured was apparently a limited toleration, such as was indicated in the two Concordates of 1725 and 1732. The Mixture, as Mr. Skinner says, had caused most dissension, but the Concordate of 1725 permitted the Mixture, if not made in presence of the congregation. The Mixture disappeared from the Scotch office. It was neither prescribed nor proscribed, but it was, to say the least of it, tacitly sanctioned where it was peaceably observed. The mode of observance, doubtless, varied in different places. In comparatively recent times the writer's impression is that the general custom was to mix in private. Again, Prayer for the Dead is left so far open. There is no limiting clause to the Prayer for the Whole State of Christ's Church, while the commemoration of the faithful departed in the body of the prayer is rather

of the first century of disestablishment (1688-1788) both disappear from history. Mr. Sievwright did not live to witness the happy effects of these changes. He

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more distinct than that in the English office. The Church thus—so far as the witness of the native office could go—settled down to a guarded toleration of these two Usages—a condition of things which, in the matter of ritual, is probably the only one that in a comprehensive Church is compatible with harmony and due liberty.

With regard to the oblation and invocation following the words of institution, there was and is no option as to the use of this arrangement by those who use the Scotch office, the prayers being incorporated in the office. But this peculiarity may be said to have never caused any real dissension amongst native Churchmen. On the contrary, as has already been said, it has been almost invariably regarded as the main glory of the office, as being at once primitive and appropriate, and forming a valuable safeguard of Eucharistic truth.

Judging from the nature of the case, from the slight and chiefly negative indications of history, and from the more distinct witness of recent times, the writer is disposed to believe that the Usages and the peculiarities of the Non-juring theology were all along mainly a clerical interest. The permanent effect of the primitive Eastern movement on the laity as a body was chiefly of a more general nature. They attained to a deep reverence for the Holy Eucharist as a means of grace, to a firm belief in the doctrine of a middle state, and, generally, to a profound respect for everything that was primitive and apostolical. But they do not appear to have entered into the controverted particulars of any of these primitive doctrines.

And even among the clergy the probability seems to be that none of the Usages, save those connected with the Eucharist, were ever practised, except in very rare and exceptional cases, confined chiefly to the early stage of the Usage movement, and even then only resorted to after much consultation with the English Non-jurors, and the most careful precautions to ensure secrecy. No case could be more exceptional than that of Rattray, of Craighall, afterwards Bishop of Dunkeld, who, at his own earnest desire, was baptised and confirmed with the Usages. (Scot. Eccl. Journal, ii., 245-6.) As the movement proceeded, the determined opposition by which it was met seems to have made its leaders fain to compound for the sanction of the Eucharistic Usages by the entire repudiation of all the rest. Yet there are still

died in the year 1790. His opponent, Mr Skinner, his senior by seven years, survived him seventeen years.

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traces in the Church of the practice of those secondary Usages. The Episcopal chest contains forms for the use of chrism in the handwriting of at least two of the Bishops. There is one by Bishop John Falconer for the use of chrism in confirmation. By the same prelate there is also a "prayer for consecrating the oil—an abridgment for the most part of a prayer from the Greek Euchology."—(Scot. Eccl. Journal, ii., p. 266.)

There is another form for the consecration of the oil ascribed to Bishop Rattray. The Rev. George Sutherland, Portsoy, once made a copy of the latter. The same gentleman saw in his younger days the chrism vials of Bishop Alexander, of Dunkeld. They were two in number, one for confirmation and another of a different tint for unction. The vials were in the possession of the late Mr. Grieve, of Ellon, to whom they had come from Bishop Petrie, Bishop Alexander's nephew, and were kept by him in a well-worn shagreen case, apparently their original receptacle. It is said, however, that "it was not known if Bishop Alexander ever made any use of the vials."

NOTE.

Light thrown on the Eighteenth-Century Revival, the influence of Jacobitism, and the date of Skinner's Ordination, by the Diary of the Rev. Alexander Lunan, of Blairdaff.

THE REVIVAL.

In spite of the zeal of the Usagers, the eighteenth century was far advanced before the restoration of what are now regarded by Churchmen as indispensable rites and observances was fully accomplished, at least in the country districts. When Mr. Lunan began his ministry at Blairdaff (in November, 1729), the congregation had apparently to be confirmed *en masse*. On Good Friday, March 27, 1730, after due preparatory instruction, the Bishop confirmed "one hundred and ninety of ye congregation." On July 26, 1733, he "confirmed in and about ninety of them." This second draft probably exhausted the list of

presentable candidates, and so at the next confirmation (July 3, 1737) only "sixteen different persons" were presented to the Bishop.

CHRISTMAS SOLEMNITIES.

Mr. Lunan never, while at Blairdaff, celebrated the Eucharist in church on Christmas Day. He only began the practice at Northwater Bridge on Christmas Day, 1745, taking the precaution to intimate the innovation on the Third Sunday in Advent. Probably Northwater Bridge was one of the first places where the practice was introduced. It was more than thirty years after this period (or about 1777) that Mr. Jolly introduced it at Parkdargue, Forgue.—(Bishop Jolly, p. 26.)

LIMITED USE OF THE PRAYER BOOK AND ITS OCCASIONAL OFFICES.

Mr. Lunan notes in one of his entries (October 19, 1742) as if it was a new thing with him that he had married a couple "by the form appointed by the Church." Prayer books appear to have been very scarce. On January 16, 1730, Lunan distributed "to ye people who frequented the meeting house one hundred books of common prayer." "Part of the compliment sent by good Mrs. Potts" [mother of Lady Grant, of Monymusk].

JACOBITISM OF THE LAITY.

An entry in Mr. Lunan's diary (Nov. 4, 1744) confirms what has been said (p. 46, *Seq.*) as to the difficulties which beset a complying clergyman, and leads to the supposition that many clergymen may have been restrained from compliance by their congregations :—

Nov. 4th, 1744.—By the Bishop's appointment I went to Stonehaven, and supplied the congregation there, they having shut up their meeting-house to prevent their incumbent, Mr. Ramsay, entering it—[he] having sometime before qualified and taken the oaths to ——. Read morning and evening prayers in a house they had hired, and preached, &c.

THE BURIAL SERVICE.

While backward in some respects, Mr. Lunan's practice was in at least one particular in advance of that of succeeding generations. He "read the burial office over the corps" of a parishioner not only in the parish churchyard, but sometimes even in the parish church, and on one occasion at least he delivered there "a funeral oration upon the deceased."

1738, Dec. 4th.—Performed the burial office with Mr. Laing [of Putachie] over the corps of my Lady Forbes, in the church of Keirne, near by the house of Castle Forbes [now Druminnor].

1742, April 23rd.—I read the burial office, in the church of Monymusk, at the interment of Mrs. Potts [mother of Lady Grant].

1742, May 4th, being Thursday.—I performed the burial office, in the church of Monymusk, at Lady Grant's interment, and preached a sermon, text Job. xiv. 1, and a funeral oration upon the deceased lady.

1742, May 9th.—I performed the burial office at the interment of Miss Christie Grant, a child of Sir Archibald Grant's, about five weeks old.

[It will be seen that Mr. Skinner's kind patron, Lady Grant, her mother, and her infant daughter, were all three laid in the churchyard within the space of sixteen days.]

THE DATE OF MR. SKINNER'S ORDINATION, AND HIS PLACE OF RESIDENCE, AND SPHERE OF LABOUR IN THE AUTUMN OF 1742.

The above points are, as has been shown (Chap. II.), of importance in determining Mr. Skinner's movements during the early years of his married life. They are all settled beyond dispute in three entries in Mr. Lunan's diary, which did not come under the writer's notice till the first chapters of this work were in print. It will be seen, however, that the conclusion to which the writer came (p. 36), from a comparison of scattered notices, is here fully confirmed :—

1742, August 22nd, ye 10th Sunday after Trinity.—Mr. John Skinner *being diaconate ye Sunday preceding at Peterhead*, read prayers and preached for me at Blairdaff, forenoon, his text Gen. xxviii. 20, 21, &c.

Then on August 29, 1742, Mr. Lunan "intimate to ye congregation at Sunhoney [Midmar] that they would have prayers and sermon upon Sunday, ye 12th September, Mr. Skinner being to supply them that day. Further, Mr. Skinner "read prayers and preached" at Blairdaff in the afternoon on Friday, October 22, and Sunday, October 24, 1742.

Thus Skinner was ordained Deacon on August 15, 1742, not on the 28th of August in that or any previous year ; and he continued to do duty in the diocese of Aberdeen during the autumn months of 1742, while his wife remained in Shetland till after November 22 of that year, when their son James was born.

MR. LUNAN'S CONFIRMATION AND ORDINATION.

It is a significant fact that Mr. Lunan—a clergyman's son—was confirmed and ordained on the same day. The confirmation was private, but the ordination apparently took place in public, the entry, however, is very confused. "Upon the 28th of October, . . . 1729, I was confirmed by Dr. James Gadderar in his lodgings in Old Aberdeen, in presence of Dr. Rattray, Bishop of Brechin [*sic*], and Mr. Patrick Lunan, Presbyter at Wartle . . . I was put into ye orders of a Deacon by him upon the same day . . . and y^{t} in Mr. Murray's meeting house, in presence of Dr. Rattray and Mr. Patrick Lunan, at Wartle, being Archdeacon, and ye congregation convened for that time."

CHAPTER VII.

Enjoys now comparative toleration and peace—Criticises Beattie's "Essay on Truth"—Answers Gordon, of Speymouth, on the power of Ecclesiastics—His family—John ordained and settled at Ellon—Removes to Aberdeen—Father and Son both suggested for Bishopric of Aberdeen—The Father declines in favour of the Son, who is elected—At Son's request Mr. Skinner writes his "Ecclesiastical History"—Co-operates with the Bishop in bringing about the Consecration of Bishop Seabury, and in the Repeal of the Penal Laws—Draws up Declaration of Faith—Writes Letter to Congregation of Old Deer, and "Plain Remarks on a Plain Account of Conversion."

FOR Mr. Skinner the great trials and troubles of life were now over. Active persecution had ceased, the abortive attempt at farming was abandoned, the Church was in comparative rest and peace, and was presently to achieve complete legal toleration—a happy consummation, which was doubly happy to Mr. Skinner, since its chief promoter, the Moses that led the people forth from bondage, sprang from his own loins! He could now breathe more freely, and take his part with vigour and effect in the discussion of any question of the day.

Criticises Beattie's "Essay on Truth."

In the year 1770 Dr. Beattie, the famous poetical Professor of Moral Philosophy in Marischal College, Aberdeen, published his "much-extolled Essay" on "The Nature and Immutability of Truth in opposition

to Sophistry and Scepticism," *i.e.*, David Hume. It seems to be now agreed that Beattie's famous treatise was more distinguished by excellence of purpose and elegance of style than by precision of thought, or closeness of reasoning. Mr. Skinner saw this clearly at the time; and though he did not care to come out publicly as Beattie's antagonist, he gave very decided expression to his views in private. He "drew up two pretty long letters on the subject, addressed to a friend, who wished to know his opinion." Of these letters an abridgment is printed in the "Memoir of his Life" (pp. 28-48). He also wrote a humorous bantering Latin address to the Professor, in the style and measure of "Tullochgorum."

In the letters, Mr. Skinner argues that the Professor had not even laid a solid foundation for the defence of truth, by clearly defining the nature and standard of truth; further, that he laid too much stress on "common sense" as a guide to truth, and also paid far too great deference to the authority of certain ancient philosophers and modern infidels—Socrates, Aristotle, Rousseau, &c.

In the ode he banteringly rallies him on these and certain other doubtful views and expressions.* (See Chap. XII.)

* The reader of Forbes's "Life of Beattie" will hardly doubt that Beattie, who, with all his amiability, was very impatient of criticism, knew something of these critiques of Mr. Skinner, and harboured a grudge against him in consequence. Otherwise it is difficult to conceive how the literary Professor could have spent so much of his holiday time in Peterhead and its neighbourhood, and yet have had scarce any intercourse or communication with Skinner, especially as he was a great admirer of the Anglican Church. Apparently the only mention of Mr. Skinner's name in the history is in connection with a theological society established in 1742.

Answer to Gordon, of Speymouth.

Soon after writing these letters, Mr. Skinner wrote and brought out through a London publisher an answer * to an elaborate work by the minister of Speymouth—the Rev. Thomas Gordon—entitled, "An Enquiry into the Power of Ecclesiastics on the Principles of Scripture and Reason." So far as can be judged from extracts, Mr. Gordon was a man of ability, and had a zeal for truth and simplicity, and a due horror of superstition and formalism. But he was too much of a zealot to be a fair reasoner. He had very decided views as to what it became the Almighty to do in the matter of man's salvation, and in reasoning on the subject he seemed to labour to reconcile Scripture to his own views rather than to conform his views to Scripture. He was apparently a Rationalist in the true sense of the word.

The great argument of his work was that there is no authority in Scripture or in reason for the existence of a separate order of Christian ministers—whether Bishops or Presbyters—and that the only ecclesiastical authority for this and other like institutions, such as "the writings of some venerable Father, or the decision of some national or General Council," may, "in the last resort, be properly resolved into human authority." "The right to dispense the positive institutions of Christianity" [Sacraments, *e.g.*] was "a part of the common privileges of Christianity," *i.e.*, they are open to one Christian as well

* An Answer to a late "Enquiry into the Powers of Ecclesiastics," &c., in a Letter to the Author. London : T. Cadell, on the Strand, 1778, pp. 177.

as another. His reasoning on this subject was in reality directed not only against "the whole body of Non-jurors, and high-flyers of every denomination," but against the principles of his own Church.

The Argument from Antiquity.

Mr. Skinner exposed the mis-statement of this argument. It was not the authority of any one Father or any one General Council that formed the standard of primitive truth, but the general testimony of all the Fathers and Councils — the *consentiens judicium Ecclesiæ Catholicæ* — the *quod semper quod ubique, quod ab omnibus.*

Priestcraft—Argument from Reason, &c.

Mr. Gordon regarded as priestcraft the dependence for "certain acts necessary to salvation upon the intermediate ministry of others to whom the exclusive right of performing them is committed," &c. —(Skinner's Answer, p. 45.) "To suppose a thing necessary to his happiness which was not in his power, or wholly depended on the good pleasure of another . . . was utterly inconsistent with our ideas of a wise and good agent."—(Skinner p. 164.) So far as it is not a protest against mere abuses and extremes, the whole of Mr. Gordon's argument on this point seems, as Mr. Skinner argued, an arraignment of the wisdom and justice of the Almighty's ordinary mode of dispensing His spiritual blessings to His people both in Jewish and in Christian times. He has, as a rule, always made use of the "intermediate ministry" of appointed human agents—

priests or ministers—though not necessarily tying the blessing to his ministers' official acts, nor permitting the faithful soul to suffer through the unfaithfulness of the minister.

Cases that Conflicted with Mr. Gordon's Canon.

Mr. Skinner cited from the Old Testament dispensation two distinct cases where "a thing necessary to happiness" was not "in the power" of the individual, but "depended wholly on the good pleasure of another, over whom he had no authority," viz., Circumcision (Genesis, xvii. 14), and the Sin Offerings (Leviticus, iv. and v.) If the child was not circumcised (by another, of course) he was "cut off from" the people of God. The sin offerings had to be offered by the priest before the sin could be forgiven. "If the priest should be so wicked as to refuse or neglect his duty, what was to be done? The sinner durst not perform the act himself. Yet by institution the forgiveness of his sin depended on it."

Faith.

A fundamental case of the same sort lay, as it were, at the very root of the Christian system. Without faith there can be no true or lasting happiness. "Is believing absolutely and originally in our own power?" says Mr. Skinner (p. 165). "What says the apostle? 'How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher?'"—(Romans x. 14). Half the world have never "heard"; of the remaining half a large proportion have heard but imperfectly.

How many of them would seize on Mr. Gordon's rule in self-justification, and say that to make their happiness dependent on belief is "utterly inconsistent with our ideas of a wise and good agent." Belief is "not in their power."

Laying on of Hands in Ordination.

In this ceremony, "the laying on of hands," Mr. Gordon said (Skinner, p. 86), was "of the same importance as waving your hand in the air or putting it in your bosom."* Mr. Skinner points out the obvious distinction between the cases, and then cites high Scriptural authority for this mode of blessing, viz., Jacob's blessing of the two sons of Joseph, and Our Lord's blessing of little children.

Grace or Blessing through Baptism.

"The doctrine of baptism washing away original sin," said Mr. Gordon, "is equally unscriptural and absurd." "But," said Mr. Skinner, "the passage in Acts xxii. 16, where Ananias bids St. Paul 'Arise and be baptised, and wash away thy sins,' sticks plaguily

* Dr. Sprott, in his recently published Lectures on "The Worship and Offices of the Church of Scotland," maintains that "without the laying on of hands an ordination is not complete or valid," and that it is "certainly not Presbyterian." John Knox's opinions are not of course binding on the present Established Church of Scotland. They differ from Dr. Sprott's, as the following extract shows — "Other ceremonie, then the publict approbatioun of the peple, and declaratioun of the chieff minister that the persone than presented is appoynted to serve that Kirk we can nott approve, for albeit the Apostilles used the impositioun of handis, yet, seeing the mirakle is ceassed, the using of the ceremonie we juge is nott necessarie."—(Knox's Buke of Discipline, chap. iii.) (See "Scottish Review," I., p. 184.)

in your road, and gravels you prodigiously to get over." Mr. Gordon cited eleven other texts against it; but "I ask you," said Mr. Skinner, "if there be anything in your eleven texts that contradicts St. Paul's one?" (pp. 98-9).

On the whole, this was perhaps the most creditable and effective of Mr. Skinner's controversial works, and it appears to have obtained a good circulation, only a few copies of a "considerable impression" remaining undisposed of at his death. It had an interest for Presbyterians as well as Episcopalians.

His Family.

Most of Mr. Skinner's family appear to have been born during the worst period of the Penal persecution, and now that he was emerging into the light of toleration and peace, he had the comfort and satisfaction of their love and attention. The family numbered three sons—James, John, and Marianus; and three daughters—Margaret, Grace, and Elizabeth. Only two of the six—one son John, and one daughter Elizabeth—left issue.

Of the daughters we learn that in early life they greatly enlivened the family circle, and occasionally coaxed their father to compose for them a song for one of their favourite airs. Of the three sons little is known, except of John, the second. He and James, the eldest, appear to have been educated together, both being placed for a time under the able tuition of their grandfather at Echt, doubtless with a view to effectual preparation for the University. In due time John entered the University, but all we are told of

James is that he took to a seafaring life, and eventually settled as a merchant at Philadelphia, where, after suffering greatly from the troubles of the American Rebellion, he died some time previous to 1789.—(Annals of Scottish Episcopacy, p. 6; Memoir, p. 15.)

James was apparently a youth of a restless, adventurous disposition, who struck out a course for himself. John took the course for which his father had destined him, and in which he had the benefit of his father's help, guidance, and influence. Of Marianus, the third son, nothing more is known than that he "went abroad, and was never heard of afterwards." Both these sons may be said to have become from early youth—though still alive, yet lost and dead to their father—sons of his sorrow, while John was, ever in the highest sense, the son of his right hand. So keen was the father's feeling of bereavement for James and Marianus, that it is said he never, after their loss, could bear to read in church the xlii. and xliii. chapters of Genesis.

John becomes a Tutor.

After leaving the University John held for two years the situation of tutor in the family of Sir Hugh Paterson, of Bannockburn, occupying his leisure hours in diligent preparation for the ministry. His father corresponded with him regularly, giving him advice as to the conduct of his studies, and also shrewd opinions on books and authors. In one of his letters he sent John an elegant Sapphic ode, in which he humorously described the wearisome tedium of his own indoor

life during a pitilessly continuous rain of three days' duration, concluding with an adaptation of Horace's *Pone me pigris*, &c.—

> Pone me latos ubi tendit agros,
> Fertilis frugum Buchanœa tellus,
> Pone me pulsant ubi nigra Thules,
> Littora fluctus.

John's Ordination, &c.

When only just entered on his twentieth year John was ordained Deacon by Bishop Gerrard, of Aberdeen, and was immediately appointed to the charge of the two congregations, which eventually coalesced into the present congregation of Ellon. After the lapse of a year he married Miss Robertson, daughter of his father's immediate predecessor at Longside. The lady brought him a dowry of 10,000 merks Scots (£562 10s. sterling),* and he rented a farm from Mr. Fullarton, of Dudwick. Thus John, though a husband at an earlier age than even his father, never suffered, like his father, from the *res angusta domi*. At Ellon John soon became known as a zealous and energetic clergyman and an impressive preacher, and after an incumbency of eleven years there, he was promoted to the greatly more important charge of St. Andrew's, Aberdeen, where he quickly made such a reputation for himself that within eight years he was appointed Coadjutor Bishop of Aberdeen. It seems Mr. Skinner, senior, was thought of for this appointment, but the father was only too happy to waive his claims in favour of the son. It is

* The marriage contract now lies before the writer. It was drawn up by Mr. Skinner, sen.

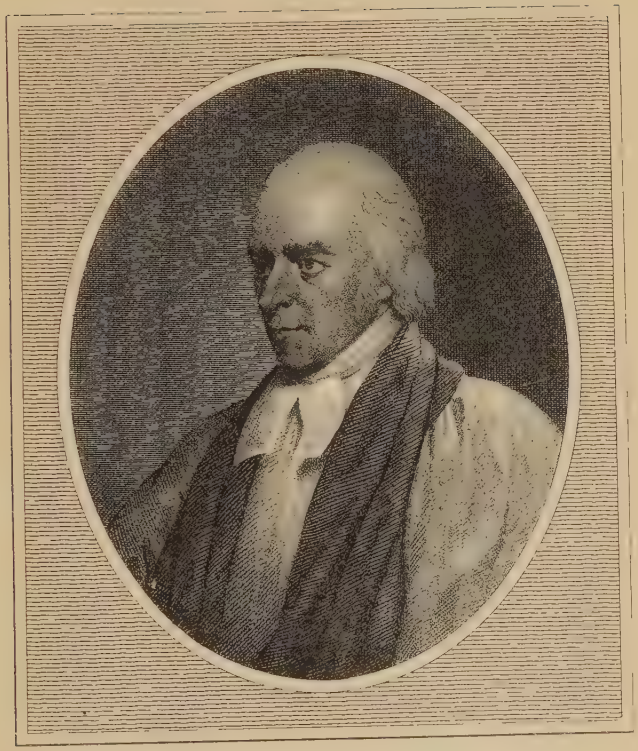
said that some of Mr. Skinner's clerical brethren waited upon him and urged him to allow himself to be put in nomination for the office, but he resisted their solicitations, assuring them that any good that he could do for the Church would be better done by and through his younger and more energetic son.* No doubt he sincerely preferred John's promotion to his own, and these words were by no means words of course. His son bore most emphatic testimony to the invaluable help which he received from his father in the discharge of his Episcopal duties.

Apart altogether from personal qualifications, the position and circumstances of the younger Skinner formed a most important element in deciding the question of eligibility between him and any country incumbent whatever. In those days there was scarcely even a nominal salary attached to the Episcopal office. A remote country incumbent could thus with difficulty maintain the dignity or discharge fitly the duties of the office. The incumbent of the chief charge of the chief city of the diocese combined all the requisite external advantages. In this particular case indeed there was such a rare combination of all the necessary qualifications, both external and personal, as left no room for doubt or hesitation.

Effect on Mr. Skinner of his Son's Elevation.

Through his son's promotion Mr. Skinner obtained

* The words which, according to the Rev. Alexander Low, Longside, Mr. Skinner made use of on the occasion were these—"You wish me to be Bishop, do you? Well, then, elect John. I shall then be Bishop all the same."



The Right Reverend John Skinner
Senior Bishop
& Primus of the Episcopal Church in Scotland.

Engraved by W. Bond from a Miniature Painted by A. Robertson.

Published May 9th 1818 by A. Brown, Aberdeen

a much more direct and powerful influence on Church affairs than he had ever previously enjoyed,* and he was also led to undertake more regular and systematic literary work in the Church's service. From his position, Bishop Skinner not only knew the sort of work that was wanted for Church defence, but he could also ensure the publication of it without much trouble or expense to the author. He seems to have generally suggested a subject to his father, and the latter, after completing his task, forwarded the manuscript to the Bishop, who apparently undertook the whole trouble and responsibility of publication.

Ecclesiastical History of Scotland.

The first work of any importance which Mr. Skinner thus brought forth under his son's auspices was his "Ecclesiastical History of Scotland." This work was begun in 1784, and completed in 1788, when it was published in two vols. by Evans, of London.† It relates, in a series of sixty letters, the ecclesiastical history of Scotland from the earliest times to the date of publication, not omitting a true and authentic account of the Hutchinsonian views—theological and philosophical. It is, on the whole, and for its age, a very creditable and useful production. Its chief value lies in its account of comparatively modern times, especially the events of the

* See p. 136.

† "An Ecclesiastical History of Scotland from the first appearance of Christianity in that Kingdom to the present time, with Remarks on the most important occurrences, in a Series of Letters to a Friend. By the Rev. John Skinner, a Presbyter of the Episcopal Church in Scotland, at Longside, Aberdeenshire."

stirring Jacobitical century (1688 - 1788), through much of which the author himself lived and suffered. Here his materials were abundant and fresh, and he made, on the whole, a very skilful and judicious use of them. He wrote with feeling, but also with moderation, as one who sought rather to vindicate the Church than to convict her oppressors. His account of the Persecution period was in fact a "case" for the Church, in view of the efforts which the author knew were about to be made for the Repeal of the Penal Laws, and it is well known that in this way the work did the Church good service, opening the eyes of influential men in England to the true state and character of the little, down-trodden body.

The History is written in an easy, idiomatic style, which contrasts favourably with the formal Johnsonese periods of most of the younger writers of the period.

The author prefixed to the work a graceful and affectionate dedication to his son and Bishop, in Latin verse; one of the many good things which he thus hid away and buried from the popular eye.

A few years after the completion of his History, Mr. Skinner had another important literary task set him by his son and the other rulers of the Church. Meantime, he was ever lending a helping hand in administration.

Consecration of Bishop Seabury.

For four years after his consecration in 1782,

Bishop Skinner was only Coadjutor Bishop of Aberdeen. For two years longer he was only Bishop of that diocese, not becoming Primus till 1788. Nevertheless, almost from the very hour of his consecration, that energetic prelate became the leading Bishop of the Church. To his energy and initiative was due every prominent forward step that was taken. Only a few days after his consecration, an application was made to him by Canon Berkeley, of Canterbury (son of the famous Bishop), about the consecration of a Bishop for America.* In two years the delicate and difficult thing was done, and done mainly by Bishop Skinner, aided by "the powerful support, counsel, and advice of his revered father." "The proposal to consecrate a Bishop for Connecticut," says Dean Skinner, of Forfar, the Bishop's son, "was no sooner proposed to Bishop Skinner, and communicated to his father, than the good man became its zealous advocate and supporter.†

* See Dr. Beardsley's Life of Bishop Seabury, p. 126, and Wilberforce's History of the American Church, p. 149.

† The importance of the Scotch Consecration of the first American Bishop has probably seldom been fully realised, even by Scottish Churchmen. One of the results was the *Scotticizing* of the American Prayer-book in its most solemn office—the Eucharistic—by the substantial adoption of the Scotch (and Eastern), instead of the English (and Western), mode of consecrating the elements. This probably seemed a small thing at the time. The nascent transatlantic Church was small. Its position and future were very uncertain. What had been done might be soon undone. But now after a hundred years of trial the prospect is very different. The then little Church has remained true to its first love, and it has mightily grown and prospered. Let any one reflect what is likely to be the relative positions of the Scotch and English offices among the Churches of the Anglican communion a hundred years, or two hundred years hence. Is it not possible that the Scotch office, instead of being used only in a small minority of

The Bishops, Kilgour and Petrie(men of the greatest private worth, but alike timid in disposition, as at that time they had become infirm in body), he stimulated to compliance by arguments which eventually proved irresistible, while his own son, who would modestly have declined the active part which he was constrained to take, he encouraged to the work with a zeal equally ardent, but more according to knowledge, than the zeal exhibited by the patrons of modern Christian missions," &c.

On the general subject of the assistance given to Bishop Skinner by his father, Mr. Skinner says Mr. Skinner, Longside, was "possessed of such mental resources as at once enabled him to baffle and defeat every attempt made to counteract the measures deemed necessary by his son and himself for the speedy relief of the sadly-depressed Episcopacy of Scotland. In proof of which Mr. Skinner readily outargued the argumentative, outwitted the tribe of

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Anglican Churches, may be used in the majority? It may have become the great Western as well as the Eastern use, and in this, as in other matters, the New World will have "redressed the balance of the old."

Within the last few years the Churchmen of America, especially those of Connecticut, have given striking proofs of the interest with which they regard the Scotch element in the origin of their Church—

1. In 1881, Dr. Beardsley, the American ecclesiastical historian (New Haven), published a very full and interesting history of Bishop Seabury, dedicated to the Primus of the Scotch Episcopal Church.

2. Professor Harte, of Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut, has just issued (1883) a second edition of his reprint of Bishop Seabury's Communion Office, with a learned "Historical Sketch and Notes."

3. Then these zealous Connecticut Churchmen have lately had all the documents connected with the Seabury Consecration printed in *fac-simile*, and distributed freely in this country, as well as in America.

witlings, and failed not to outstrip those in the knowledge of ecclesiastical antiquity who buckled on the armour of the primitive fathers, whether for the purpose of assault or defence. In short, the fact is well known in Scotland, and his son, the Bishop, never attempted to conceal it, that, in all his measures for the Church's relief and prosperity, he was, under God, *more indebted to the head, the heart, and the hand of his own father . . . than to any other fellow-labourer.*"*

Compliance with the State (1788).

The next great work in which Bishop Skinner engaged was the reconciliation of the Church with the State. The way was paved for this happy consummation by the demise of Prince Charles Edward, January 31, 1788. The first step in the work was the abandonment of the long-standing attitude of stubborn resistance, and a general agree-

4. A very interesting additional instance has come to hand. In the July, 1882, number of the American "Church Review" (138), Bishop Williams, of Connecticut, has an article on "The Scottish Communion Office," in which he proves with great learning, clearness, and force, that the Scottish Episcopal Church restored "the ancient order of the three structural elements of the Consecration Prayer in the Eucharistic Office," and he says that in giving to the American Church this primitive form, "Scotland gave us a greater boon than when she gave us the Episcopate" (p. 18).

5. Yet one interesting instance more. The clergy of Connecticut have lately held the first of a series of three "Centennial observances" of the leading events connected with Bishop Seabury's appointment, viz., his Election by the clergy of Connecticut. The other two, his Consecration and his Reception in America, will follow in due time. (See Note at end of Chapter.)

* Annals of Scottish Episcopacy, pp. 522-3.

ment to pray in church for King George by name. This important step was taken by the Diocesan Synod of Aberdeen, which was held at Longside (April 9, 1788), doubtless in Mr. Skinner's chapel. It may be conceived how greatly the deliberations of the Synod were swayed by Mr. Skinner's influence. The Synod, in fact, as a body took now the step which Skinner had, as an individual, taken forty years before. Those forty years of barren struggle tended to add weight to his words. In a short time the whole Church (with the exception of the superannuated Bishop Rose) had done as the Aberdeen Synod did, and thus at last the way was cleared for

The Repeal of the Penal Laws.

For the accomplishment of that happy event, however, four more anxious, toilsome years were required. Its great promoter was Bishop Skinner, but the letters of the period quite bear out the statement that the energetic Bishop received most effective help from his equally energetic father. Father and son worked together with a will in this as in other matters, and hard and persistent work was needed. Besides effective home help, their labours were greatly lightened by the zealous co-operation of a knot of pious Churchmen and sympathetic Hutchinsonians in England—Sir James Allan Park,* William Stevens, Dr. Berkeley, Rev. Jonathan Boucher, Dr. Gaskin, &c.

* See Park's Life of William Stevens for an interesting notice of these excellent men. Park was a Scotchman, and according to the

Declaration of Faith.

The Relief Bill by no means gave immediate relief. It was clogged with conditions. The clergy were required to subscribe the Thirty-Nine Articles of the English Church. To some of their number, and those not the least learned and able, this was no small stumbling-block. It circumscribed the liberty which they had so long enjoyed of speculating at will on some of the deeper mysteries of the faith, and explaining them in their own way.

Hence, after the difficulty with the State, came a difficulty with the Church, and time was required for its solution. The clergy could not change their opinions in a day; and, in point of fact, it took twelve years to effect the necessary change, subscription to the Articles not having been authoritatively agreed to till 1804. Meantime, till subscription should be agreed to, it was desirable to have some quasi-authoritative summary of the principles of the Church to refer to in proof of their agreement with Scripture and with the English Articles. Mr. Skinner was appointed to draw up such a Summary, a duty which he discharged in a "highly satisfactory" manner.* The Summary or Declaration

humour of the times, was represented by the legal wags as having, by coming to England, emerged from barbarism to high civilisation :—

James Allan Park
Came naked stark
From Scotland ;
But he got clothes,
And lives with Beaux
In England.

* "Some of the Bishops and clergy, well knowing Mr. Skinner's abilities for such a task, requested of him to draw up a Declaration of Faith in a series of distinct Articles, accompanied with such explanatory

was not published till after the author's death, when it was included among his posthumous works; but no doubt it was, in accordance with its purpose and the manner of the time, widely circulated in manuscript, and helped to pave the way for mutual toleration and union.

Letter to the Congregation of Old Deer.

Mr. Skinner's next service to the Church was the publication of a Letter to the members of the English or qualified congregation of Old Deer, earnestly exhorting those separated brethren to re-unite with the native Episcopal Church, and thereby put an end to a now causeless division, and secure to themselves the enjoyment of all Church privileges. It was a most natural and fitting thing for Mr. Skinner to make this appeal, as he had in time past, when the congregation was in great straits, laboured most assiduously amongst them. The appeal, however, did not meet with the success which it deserved. The congregation, as a body, instead of attempting to heal the breach, took a step which could not fail to widen it. They appointed as their clergyman a Mr. Ward, a narrow-minded, intolerant Calvinistic curate, from Norfolk, who came amongst the people with the air of a missionary sent out to convert the heathen. Soon after his settlement at Old Deer, Mr. Ward circulated a small tract entitled, "A Plain Account of Conversion," in which he "blessed God who had enabled and taught him to embrace the

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notes as might clearly show their conformity to the purest standards of the primitive Church, as well as to those of the present Established Church of England."—(Memoir, p. 152.)

view of divine truth called Calvinistic," and in which, in the usual style of the zealots of his party at that time, he treated all who did not accept these views as not merely so far in error, but as altogether without the pale of the Gospel—heathen men, in short.

It was not to be supposed that Mr. Skinner would sit still and unconcerned whilst a fanatical *brochure* of this nature was being circulated in his immediate neighbourhood, startling and unsettling his own flock and all the old-fashioned Church people in the district, and treating him and his fellow-presbyters as blind leaders of the blind. He therefore published (in 1799) a

Pamphlet in Reply to Mr. Ward.

The pamphlet was entitled, "Some Plain Remarks on a Plain Account of Conversion, now in Circulation through the Parish and Neighbourhood of Old Deer."

It was not difficult for Mr. Skinner to expose, in brief space, the narrowness, the one-sidedness, and the intolerance of this tract. Of the claim of Mr. Ward and his party to be the only preachers of the Gospel, he said, "To spread or preach the Gospel has of late years become a favourite topic with a certain class of people, who would fain have it believed that without them there would be no more Gospel in Britain than amongst the wildest Indians." He ridiculed the idea of regarding conversion "as something of the nature of an electrical stroke, instantaneous, and wrought in a moment, and consequently *alike* in all converts, both in its operations and effects."

"The 'Conversion of Sinners' in the Christian sense

of the expression" was "a progressive and repeated work; indeed the whole business of our lives begun in us, and carried on in us by the means of grace," which latter Mr. Ward had never "been taught by the Church of England to depreciate, and which were more to be trusted to than 'inward strugglings' and declamatory harangues."

NOTE.

The following is the conclusion of Bishop Williams' (of Connecticut's) article referred to in page 137 :—

"The first National Church, therefore, possessing the English succession, and holding the principles of the English Reformation, which restored the ancient order of the three structural elements in the Consecration Prayer in the Eucharistic office was the Episcopal Church of Scotland. And the restoration was effected in those dark days of relentless persecution that followed the unsuccessful attempt of Charles Edward Stuart in 1745. This order first appears in those ancient liturgical forms in the East, that carry us back to the age of Pagan persecutions; it has survived in the East centuries of fearful sufferings for the name of Jesus; it was recovered in the West after centuries of loss, in a Church which had been deprived of its worldly honours, and suffered the spoiling of its goods, and was hunted 'as a partridge on the mountains.'

"How it came from Scotland to us, and was incorporated in our Prayer-book in 1789, does not need to be told. It is scarcely too much to say that, in giving it to us, Scotland gave us a greater boon than when she gave us the Episcopate. That we might have obtained, and as events proved, should have obtained from England. This England had not to give us. As in the Scottish Liturgy, so in ours; it stands, to use the words of Bishop Torry, 'the direct and unanswerable antagonist of Popery,' and, we may add, of Zwinglianism also"—(pp. 17-18).

GROWTH OF THE AMERICAN CHURCH.

One hundred years ago (1783) the American Episcopal Church had not one single Bishop; and Dr. Seabury was vainly knocking for Con-

secration at the doors of the English dignitaries. Now (1883) the condition of that then depressed and despised body is this—"We have grown to be a large body, and our Communion is extended into every State and territory. One year from this month our General Convention will meet in Philadelphia—a body composed of more than sixty Bishops, forming the Upper House, and more than four hundred clergymen and laymen, constituting the House of Deputies."—(Letter of Dr. Beardsley, the historian, to writer, October 23, 1882.)

THE SEABURY CENTENNIAL OBSERVANCES.

The first of the centennial anniversaries, viz., that of the election of Dr. Seabury by the Connecticut clergy at Woodbury, March 25, 1783, was commemorated this year (1883) by suitable observances, both religious and social. Besides a thanksgiving, prepared by Bishop Williams, and offered up in all the churches of the diocese on Easter Day (March 25), accompanied in many of them by suitable pulpit references, there was a special service held on the first available day in Easter Week, in St. Paul's Church, Woodbury, consisting of "the Holy Communion at eleven o'clock, with short addresses by Bishop Williams and Dr. Beardsley, the church being filled with a deeply interested congregation." "After the religious service, all in attendance were entertained at a bountiful collation prepared by the ladies of the parish, in the house where, one hundred years ago, the choice of Bishop Seabury was made, and, indeed, in the very room where the clergy met." The house is now occupied by a Methodist family, and the lady, when granting permission for the use of the historical room for the collation, added, "we can't allow any dancing!" It may be imagined with what gleeful astonishment the recital of this naive caution was received at the collation, especially by the sober-minded ecclesiastics, intent mainly on the realisation of the remote past.

SCOTCH COMMEMORATIVE OBSERVANCES.

A happy suggestion has been made to enable the Church that consecrated Bishop Seabury to do its part worthily in the work of commemorating the event. It is that the Representative Church Council, which, in due course, meets at Inverness in 1884, and at Aberdeen in 1885, should alter its order of visitation, and meet at Aberdeen in 1884, and at such time as to permit the assembled clergy and laity to join in suitable commemorative services on November 14. If this suggestion can be acted on, the commemorative services on this side the Atlantic will certainly not be deficient in interest or solemnity.

Not a few Scottish Churchmen feel strongly that, in the Seabury Consecration, their Church was more blessed in giving than the American in receiving; and no doubt on November 14, 1884, if the chance is given, St. Andrew's Church, Aberdeen, will be filled with an enthusiastic congregation of representative Churchmen gathered from all parts of Scotland.

THE SEABURY MEMORIAL WINDOW IN THE CHANCEL OF ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, ABERDEEN.

The Congregation of St. Andrew's, Aberdeen, has lately—with friendly help from other quarters, including America—done something to keep up the memory of the event of 1784, which, if not *ære perennius*, is yet more solid and durable than "centennial observances." The east window of its newly-erected and handsome Chancel has been made in reality a Memorial of the Seabury Consecration. Its separate compartments commemorate respectively Bishop Seabury and his Consecrators, and a neat Latin inscription records the particulars of the Consecration. The *place* of the Consecration, as is now well established, was not any existing building, but the "large upper room" of the house in Longacre, which was taken down in 1795.

CHAPTER VIII.

His relations with contemporary men of letters—Bishop Skinner's graphic account of his interview with Burns in Aberdeen—Burns sends message to Mr. Skinner—Skinner sends him a rhymed epistle—Burns replies—Further correspondence between the two—Is asked by Mr. Gleig to contribute to "Encyclopædia Britannica"—Contributes materials and suggestions for articles on "The Origin of Language," on "Episcopacy," and on "The Wisdom of the Egyptians"—Semitic worship of the Host of Heaven.

His Intercourse and Correspondence with Contemporary Men of Letters.

AS Mr. Skinner, "remote from cities, ran his godly race," and never as yet had published with his name anything of a popular nature, he may be said to have been almost "unknown by name" in literary circles.* Hardly any brother of the pen appears to have corresponded with him, with the probable exception of his distinguished poetical neighbour, Beattie, the author of "The Minstrel." The first brother bard from a distance who tendered him a brotherly recognition was Burns. The two poets never met, though they only just missed meeting, Burns having once, in ignorance and to his great chagrin, passed within four miles of Skinner's house. But for a

* "One-half of Scotland already give your songs to other authors."—(Burns' Letter to Skinner. See Postea.)

short time they corresponded in cordial and brotherly style, and Burns, administering a seasonable spur to Skinner's muse, obtained from him several songs for "Johnson's Museum," a musical miscellany, to which he himself was the chief contributor, and the most diligent caterer.

Bishop Skinner's Meeting with Burns.

Skinner's son, the Bishop, was the medium of the epistolary introduction of the two. He happened to meet Burns in Aberdeen, and received from the Ayrshire bard a most cordial verbal message to his father, to which the father sent an equally cordial response in rhyme. The following letter, in which the Bishop gave his father an account of his meeting with Burns, is very lively and interesting:—

Calling at the printing office the other day, whom should I meet on the stair but the famous Burns, the Ayrshire bard! And on Mr. Chalmers telling him that I was the son of "Tullochgorum," there was no help but I must step into the inn hard by and drink a glass with him and the printer. Our time was short, as he was just setting off for the south, and his companion hurrying him, but we had fifty "auld sangs" through hand, and spent an hour or so most agreeably. "Did not your father write 'The Ewie wi' the Crookit Horn?'" "Yes." "'Oh, an' I had the loon that did it!'" said he, in a rapture of praise, "but tell him how I love and esteem and venerate his truly Scottish muse." On mentioning *his* "Ewie," and how you were delighted with it, he said it was all owing to yours, which had started the thought. He had been at Gordon Castle, and came by Peterhead. "Then," said I, "You were within four Scottish miles of 'Tullochgorum's' dwelling." Had you seen the look he gave, and how expressive of vexation; had he been your own son, you could not have wished a better proof of affection. "Well," said he, at parting, and shaking me by the hand, as if he had been really my brother, "I am happy in having seen you, and thereby conveying my long-harboured sentiments of regard for your worthy sire; assure him of it in the heartiest manner, and that never did a devotee

of the Virgin Mary go to Loretto with more fervour than I would have approached his dwelling and worshipped at his shrine." He was collecting on his tour all the "auld Scots sangs" he had not heard of, and likewise the tunes, that he may get them set to music. "Perhaps," said he, "your father might assist me in making this collection; or, if not, I should be happy in any way to rank him among my correspondents." "Then give me your direction, and it is probable you may hear from him some time or other." On this he wrote his direction on a slip of paper, which I have enclosed, that you may see it under his own hand. As to his personal appearance, it is very much in his favour. He is a genteel-looking young man, of good address, and talks with much propriety, as if he had received an academical education. He has, indeed, a flow of language, and seems never at a loss to express himself in the strongest and most nervous manner. On my quoting, with surprise, some sentiments of the Ayrshire *plowman*, "Well," he said, "and a ploughman I was from youth, and till within these two years had my shoes studded with a hundred *tackets*. But even then I was a reader, and had very early made all the English poets familiar to me, not forgetting the old bards of the best of all poetical books—the Old Testament."*

Here Burns is certainly presented in a very interesting light, fully corroborating the high opinion of his conversation and manner expressed by the Duchess of Gordon, Mr. Dugald Stewart, and other excellent contemporary judges. The Bishop's account of the interview, and the cordial message of Burns, drew from Mr. Skinner a rhymed epistle which Burns termed "by far the finest poetic compliment he ever got."† It was warmly appreciative. Like his son, Mr. Skinner laid

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* Posthumous Works, vol. iii., pp. 106, *Seq.*

† "I got an excellent poetic epistle yesternight from the old, venerable author of 'Tullochgorum,' 'John of Badenyon,' &c. I suppose you know he is a clergyman. It is by far the finest poetic compliment I ever got. I will send you a copy of it."—Letter to Miss Margaret Chalmers (Mrs. Hay.)

stress upon the youth of Burns,

> But, thanks to praise, ye're i' your prime,
> And may chant on this lang, lang time ;
> For, lat me tell you, 'tware a crime
> To haud your tongue.
> Wi' sic a knack's ye hae at rhyme,
> And ye sae young.

Skinner little imagined that, old as he himself was, he had yet before him double the number of years that remained to his most promising, but all too frail, youthful brother.

The epistle is distinguished chiefly by the warmth and cordiality of the writer's praise of Burns' works and genius. He expresses joy at the happy accident that

> Led his chil' up Cha'mer's stair,

and gave him

> Sae braw a skance
> Of Ayrshire's dainty poet there,
> By lucky chance.

He deeply regrets that he was not of the party, but is proud to think that Burns had heard of his attempts to be a bard,

> And wadna wish for mair reward
> Than his guid grace.

He has read his "bonnie beukie line by line," and not only acknowledges its high merits, but sees nothing in it that can be justly regarded as improper—

> Ye've naething said that looks like blun'er,
> To fowk o' sense.

He praises Burns' "pawky 'Dream,'"

> I never saw the like in print,
> The Birth-day Laurit durst na' mint
> As ye hae done.

Also his "Mailie" and his guid "Auld Mare," but

chiefly "the weel-tauld Cottar's Night"—

A piece so finished and so tight,
There's nane o's a'
Could preachment timmer cleaner dight,
In kirk or ha'.

For his part, he heartily allowed him—

The warld o' praise that's justly due you,
And but a plowman! Sall, I trow you,
Gin it be sae,
A miracle I will allow you,
Deny 't wha may.

The conclusion is in character—

Sae canty plowman, fare-ye-weel,
Lord bless ye lang wi' hae an' heil,
And keep ye ay the honest chiel
That ye hae been.
Syne lift ye to a better beil
When this is deen.

Mr. Skinner's epistle was dated "Linshart, Sept. 25th, 1787." Burns replied to it in an interesting prose letter * undated, but believed to have been written in Edinburgh soon after the receipt of the epistle (about Oct. 25), in the following terms:—

Reverend and Venerable Sir,—Accept, in plain dull prose, my most sincere thanks for the best poetical compliment I ever received. I assure you, sir, as a poet, you have conjured up an airy demon of vanity in my fancy, which the best abilities in your *other* capacity would be ill able to lay. I regret, and while I live shall regret, that when I was in the north I had not the pleasure of paying a younger brother's dutiful respect to the author of the best Scotch song ever Scotland saw—"Tullochgorum's my delight!" The world may think slightingly of the craft of song-making, if they please; but, as Job says—"O! that mine adversary had written a book!" let them try. There is a certain something in the old Scotch songs, a wild happiness

* An English periodical stated lately (March, 1883) that Burns wrote his poems in the Scotch dialect, because he knew no other language.

of thought and expression, which peculiarly marks them, not only from English songs, but also from the modern efforts of song-wrights, in our native manner and language. The only remains of this enchantment, these spells of the imagination, rests with you. Our true brother, Ross of Lochlee, was likewise "owre cannie"—a "wild warlock"—but now he sings among the "sons of the morning." I have often wished, and will certainly endeavour, to form a kind of common acquaintance among all the genuine sons of Caledonian song. The world, busy in low prosaic pursuits, may overlook most of us; but "reverence thyself." The world is not our *peers*, so we challenge the jury. We can lash that world, and find ourselves a very great source of amusement and happiness independent of that world. There is a work going on in Edinburgh, just now, which claims your best assistance [Johnson's Musical Miscellany]. An engraver in this town has set about collecting and publishing all the Scotch songs, with the music, that can be found. Songs in the English language, if by Scotchmen, are admitted, but the music must all be Scotch. Drs. Beattie and Blacklock are lending a hand, and the first musician in town presides over that department. I have been absolutely crazed about it, collecting old stanzas, and every information remaining, respecting their origin, authors, &c. This last is but a very fragment business; but at the end of his second number—the first is already published—a small account will be given of the authors, particularly to preserve those of latter times. Your three songs — "Tullochgorum," "John of Badenyon," and "Ewie wi' the Crookit Horn," go in this second number. I was determined, before I got your letter, to write you, begging that you would let me know where the editions of these pieces may be found, as you would wish them to continue in future times; and if you would be so kind to this undertaking as send any songs, of your own or others, that you would think proper to publish. Your name will be inserted among the other authors, "*Nill ye, will ye.*" One half of Scotland already give your songs to other authors. Paper is done. I beg to hear from you—the sooner the better, as I leave Edinburgh in a fortnight or three weeks. I am, with the warmest sincerity, sir, your obliged humble servant, ROBERT BURNS.

To this letter Mr. Skinner's answer was as follows:

LINSHART, 14*th November*, 1787.

SIR,—Your kind return, without date, but of post-mark October 25th, came to my hand only this day; and, to testify my punctuality to my poetic engagement, I sit down immediately to answer it in kind.

Your acknowledgment of my poor but just encomiums on your surprising genius, and your opinion of my rhyming excursions, are both, I think, by far too high. The difference between our two tracks of education, and ways of life, is entirely in your favour, and gives you the preference every manner of way. I know a classical education will not create a versifying taste, but it mightily improves and assists it; and though, where both these meet, there may sometimes be ground for approbation, yet where taste appears single, as it were, and neither cramped nor supported by acquisition, I will always sustain the justice of its prior claim to applause. A small portion of taste this way I have had almost from childhood, especially in the old Scottish dialect; and it is as old a thing as I remember my fondness for "Chryste Kirk o' the Green," which I had by heart ere I was twelve years of age, and which, some years ago, I attempted to turn into Latin verse. While I was young, I dabbled a good deal in these things; but, on getting the black gown, I gave it pretty much over, till my daughters grew up, who being all tolerably good singers, plagued me for words to some of their favourite tunes, and so extorted those effusions which have made a public appearance beyond my expectations, and contrary to my intentions—at the same time that I hope there is nothing to be found in them uncharacteristic, or unbecoming the cloth, which I would always wish to see respected. As to the assistance you propose from me in the undertaking you are engaged in, I am sorry I cannot give it so far as I could wish, and you perhaps expect. My daughters, who were my only intelligencers, are all *foris-familiate*, and the old woman, their mother, has lost that taste. There are two from my own pen, which I might give you, if worth the while. One to the old Scotch tune of "Dumbarton's Drums." The other, perhaps, you have met with, as your noble friend the Duchess has, I am told, heard of it. It was squeezed out of me by a brother parson in her neighbourhood, to accommodate a new Highland reel for the Marquis's birth-day, to the stanza of—

Tune your fiddles, tune them sweetly, &c.

If this last answer your purpose, you may have it from a brother of mine, Mr. James Skinner, writer in Edinburgh, who, I believe, can give the music too. There is another humorous thing, I have heard, said to have been done by the Catholic priest Geddes, and which hit my taste much :—

There was a wee wifeikie was comin' frae the fair,
Had gotten a little drappikie, which bred her meikil care;
It took upo' the wifie's heart, and she began to spew,
And co' the wee wifeikie I wish I binna fou.
I wish, &c.

I have heard of another new composition by a young plowman of my acquaintance, that I am vastly pleased with, to the tune of the "Humours of Glen," which, I fear, wont do, as the music, I am told, is of Irish original. I have mentioned these, such as they are, to show my readiness to oblige you, and to contribute my mite, if I could, to the patriotic work you have in hand, and which I wish all success to. You have only to notify your mind, and what you want of the above shall be sent you. Meantime, while you are thus publicly, I may say, employed, do not sheath your own proper and piercing weapon. From what I have seen of yours already, I am inclined to hope for much good. One lesson of virtue and morality delivered in your amusing style, and from such as you, will operate more than dozens would do from such as me, who shall be told it is our employment, and be never more minded; whereas, from a pen like yours, as being one of the many, what comes will be admired. Admiration will produce regard, and regard will leave an impression, especially when *example goes along.*

Now binna saying I'm ill bred
Else by my troth I'll no be glad:
For cadgers ye ha'e heard it said,
And sic like fry,
Maun ay be harlin' in their trade,
And sae maun I.

Wishing you, from my poet-pen, all success, and in my other character, all happiness and heavenly direction, I remain, with esteem, your sincere friend,

JOHN SKINNER.

Burns' next letter to Mr. Skinner is dated Edinburgh, February 14th, 1788. After apologising for his rather lengthened silence, he proceeds—

I must beg your pardon for the epistle you sent me appearing in the Magazine. I had given a copy or two to some of my intimate friends, but did not know of the printing of it till the publication of the Magazine. However, as it does great honour to us both, I hope you will forgive it. The second volume of the songs I mentioned to you in my last, is published to-day. I send you a copy, which I beg you will accept as a mark of the veneration I have long had, and shall ever have, for your character, and of the claim I make to your continued acquaintance. Your songs appear in the third volume, with your name in the index, as I assure you, sir, I have heard your "Tullochgorum," particularly among our west country folks, given to many different

names, and most commonly to the immortal author of "The Minstrel," who, indeed, never wrote anything superior to "Gie's a sang, Montgomery cried." Your brother has promised me your verses to the Marquis of Huntly's reel, which certainly deserves a place in the collection. My kind host, Mr. Cruickshank, of the High School here, and said to be one of the best Latins in this age, begs me to make you his grateful acknowledgments for the entertainment he has got in a Latin publication of yours that I borrowed for him from your acquaintance, and my much respected friend, in this place, the Reverend Dr. Webster. Mr. Cruickshank maintains that you write the best Latin since Buchanan. I leave Edinburgh to-morrow, but shall return in three weeks. Your song you mentioned in your last, to the tune of "Dumbarton's Drums," and the other, which you say was done by a brother by trade of mine, a plowman, I shall thank you much for a copy of each. I am ever, reverend sir, with the most respectful esteem and sincere veneration, yours, ROBERT BURNS.

To this letter our author sent the following reply :—

LINSHART, 28*th April*, 1788.

DEAR SIR,—I received your last with the curious present you have favoured me with, and would have made proper acknowledgments before now, but that I have been necessarily engaged in matters of a different complexion. And now that I have got a little respite, I make use of it to thank you for this valuable instance of your good-will, and to assure you, that, with the sincere heart of a true Scotchman, I highly esteem both the gift and the giver ; as a small testimony of which I have herewith sent you, for your amusement (and in a form which I hope you will excuse, for saving postage), the two songs I wrote about to you already. "Charming Nancy" is the real production of genius in a plowman of twenty years of age at the time of its appearing, with no more education than what he picked up at an old farmer grandfather's fire-side. And I doubt not, but you will find in it a simplicity and delicacy, with some turns of humour, that will please one of your taste, at least it pleased me when I first saw it, if that can be any recommendation to it. The other* is entirely descriptive of my own sentiments, and you may make use of one or both, as you shall see good. You will oblige me by presenting my respects to your host,

* "The Old Man's Song," tune, "Dumbarton's Drums." (See Appendix.)

Mr. Cruickshank, who has given such high approbation to my poor "Latinity." You may let him know, that as I have likewise been a dabbler in Latin poetry, I have two things that I would, if he desires it, submit, not to his judgment, but to his amusement—the one, a translation of "Chryste Kirk o' the Green," printed at Aberdeen some years ago; the other, "Batrachomyomachia Homeri Latinis vestita cum additamentis," given in lately to Chalmers to print—if he pleases. Mr. C. will know, "*Seria non semper delectant, non joca semper. Semper delectant seria mixta jocis.*" I have just room to repeat compliments and good wishes from, sir, your humble servant,

JOHN SKINNER.

"*Encyclopædia Britannica*"—*Mr. Gleig.*

A year or two after this correspondence with Burns, Mr. Skinner was asked to contribute to the "Encyclopædia Britannica" (3rd edition), by Mr. Gleig, then a leading contributor, and within a year or two editor of that great work.* Mr. Skinner declined to supply entire and finished articles for the Encyclopædia, but he freely communicated to Mr. Gleig whatever ideas or information he could supply on any subject on which he consulted him, leaving it to him to make any use he pleased of the same.

* The precise time at which Mr. Gleig became editor of the Encyclopædia is not known to the writer; but a letter of Mr. Gleig's, received since the publication of his Life, from his son, the late Chaplain-General, proves that the date was some time before Nov. 14, 1793, which is the date of the letter. The letter is addressed to Professor Robinson, and it describes "the circumstances under which," Gleig says, "the management of the work passed into my hands." Before the death of the former editor, Mr. Macfarquhar, Mr. Gleig "was entrusted with the revisal of many articles written by other men;" and on the editor's death, the proprietors offered the editorship to him. They went to Stirling and "offered me," he says, "very handsome terms, if I would give up my charge as a clergyman, go to Edin-

The Origin of Language.

Mr. Gleig had undertaken to write an article on this subject for the Encyclopædia, and on May 21, 1791, he wrote to Mr. Skinner requesting him to supply him with some ideas upon it. Mr. Skinner's answer has not been preserved; but an ample acknowledgment of it was made by Mr. Gleig. When the article was finished he wrote (Sept. 11, 1791), thanking Mr. Skinner warmly, and saying that his letter "had been of great use;" the arguments of the article "were suggested by" it; "the merit," he adds, "if any, is yours."

Article on "Prophecy."

Mr. Gleig urged Mr. Skinner to write for the Encyclopædia an article on "Prophecy." "He declined, however," says Mr. Gleig, "but sent to me the observations which constitute the paragraph marked No. 4 in the printed article. That article was printed *verbatim*, or nearly *verbatim*, from his letter."

In the summer of 1792, the two literary divines met, and from the way in which they afterwards

burgh and superintend their publication." "Many reasons," he adds, "conspired to make me decline that offer, which was then made to Dr. Rotheram, and after a very few days' trial, he relinquished the employment. It was again offered to me, and accepted on conditions that I should be allowed to employ a substitute to take care of the press in my absence from Edinburgh."—(MS. letter of Bishop Gleig, in possession of writer.) "Mr. Gleig used," says his son, "to visit Edinburgh, and stay there two whole days out of every week, and it was only by sitting up till long after midnight that he could get through his labours."—(Note of ex-Chaplain-General accompanying the above letter, date January 22, 1879.) Mr. Gleig's substitute was Mr. James Walker, afterwards Bishop of Edinburgh.

wrote and spoke of each other, it is evident that the meeting had a potent effect in dispelling prejudices and antipathies, and bringing about a just mutual appreciation. No man has left a more correct estimate of Mr. Skinner's powers than Mr. Gleig, or paid a higher tribute to his merits.

On this occasion Mr. Gleig, at Mr. Skinner's request, furnished him with a copy of the articles which he had himself written for the Encyclopædia; and the result was a rather lengthy correspondence between the two on the subject of certain of the articles.

The Wisdom of the Egyptians.

On March 31st, 1794, Mr. Gleig, now editor of the Encyclopædia, wrote to consult Mr. Skinner on a subject on which he probably expected a very decided Hutchinsonian answer. He was preparing an article on "Philosophy" for the Encyclopædia, and he wanted, for his guidance in determining the history of Egyptian Astronomy, to know what evidence regarding the true solar system "the beginning of the Book of Genesis" presented "to a real critic of the Hebrew language," which he took Mr. Skinner to be. If Genesis taught Copernicanism, the fact would explain a seeming Egyptian historical anomaly. The Egyptian priests taught Pythagoras the Copernican system, but they were "but poor mathematicians themselves," and they apparently handed on their knowledge from the time of "the first Thoth." The question was—Could Joseph have been "the first Thoth?" Was it likely that he had had a knowledge of the true solar system imparted to him from above, and then communicated

it, with all the other "arts and sciences," to the Egyptians?

Had these questions been put to Hutchinson or Julius Bate, they would probably have received a very prompt and confident answer of some sort. But though the Hutchinsonian was strong in Mr. Skinner, the man of sense was yet stronger. He gave a very sound and cautious reply. "Some late enquirers," he said, had indeed found, "by deduction, the evidence that Mr. Gleig wished for" in the first chapter of Genesis, but he himself would not go beyond the averment that "there was nothing in that chapter that had the least semblance of contradicting the Copernican system." The direct teaching of such truths, however, was not the object of the sacred writer. His great purpose was to impress on men's minds the all-important truth that God created both the heaven and the earth, and, therefore, that the worship of "the sun, the moon, and the stars, and all the host of heaven," so common in early times, was simply idolatry.*

But while the Hebrew text could not, in Mr. Skinner's opinion, be said to teach Copernicanism, its teaching harmonised, he thought, with that system far

* To what extent "the sun, the moon, and the host of heaven," were worshipped by the Semitic neighbours of Israel, and, in corrupt times, by Israel itself, is probably seldom fully apprehended, even by attentive readers of Scripture. The fact is obscured by the names by which the heavenly bodies are known as objects of worship. The names are vague, and vary in different nations. In a general way, the sun was known as the King, and the moon as the Queen of Heaven. But one nation called the sun King (Milcom, Molech); another, Lord (Baal, Beel, Bel, Belus); a third, Hadad, or Adad, or Ader (Mighty One). The moon, or sometimes the evening star Venus, was known by a general appellation signifying Star (Ishtar, Ashtoreth, Astarte).

better than could be inferred from the English version, which often fails to indicate the true shade of meaning, making, for example, the moon a "great light," instead of a "great luminary," and rendering the three distinct Hebrew words, *Heres*, *Hamah*, and *Shemesh*, promiscuously *Sun*.

CHAPTER IX.

His influence on Church opinion -Candidates for Orders—Official and semi-official influence—Dean of the Diocese from 1789—Nature and extent of his influence — Promotes the study of Hebrew—Hebrew under difficulties—The learned Turner, Mr. Andrew, Dr. Nicol—Presbyterian Hutchinsonians and Hebraists —Hebrew from the counter-movement—The Incorrigibles—The last of the Hutchinsonians—The Athanasian Creed and the Longside farmer—Mr. Murdoch, Keith.

Influence on Church Opinion.

A VERITABLE ecclesiastical Nestor, Mr. Skinner went on for nearly three-quarters of a century impressing his views and speculations on generation after generation of northern Churchmen, till at last in the north-eastern districts there was hardly a clergyman that did not think his thoughts and speak his language. No Bishop had nearly the same influence on opinion. Not one of them, indeed, combined, in the same degree, the chief elements of moral influence—learning, ability, force of character, and *opportunity*.

Candidates for Orders.

As yet there was no Theological Hall, and one most potent means of influencing opinion—open to Mr. Skinner as to other learned clergymen of the time—was the training of candidates for orders,

the teaching of the teachers. "By him," his grandson says,* "most of the clergy of the diocese of Aberdeen," towards the end of last century, "had been trained to the ministry." Doubtless the amount of training varied considerably in different cases — in some, including actual teaching; in others, only guidance and direction in the studies to be pursued. In Bishop Torry's case, it is said, it amounted to the whole of his advanced instruction, not only in theology, but even in classics, that prelate having never been at a University. Others, such as Bishop Watson, of Dunkeld, were indebted to Mr. Skinner for only their theological training. Not a few, including his own son John, and his two grandsons, John and William, were rather guided and directed than actually superintended by him in their theological studies. Bishop Macfarlane, of Ross—one of his most faithful disciples; Dean Sangster, of Lonmay, who was another; Dean Fyvie, Inverness; Mr. Murdoch, Keith; and many other ardent Northern Hutchinsonians are all believed to have sat at his feet in their early days. Mr. Skinner sought out and encouraged candidates for the ministry, as well as guided and instructed them. An elderly clergyman, the late Rev. Alexander Bruce, of Banff, once told the writer that Mr. Skinner one day came up to him, when he was a youth, and shook a halfcrown piece into his hand, saying, "I enlist thee in the name of my Master, the King of Kings." The halfcrown was retained intact for many years, and the

* Annals of Scottish Episcopacy, p. 468. Bishop Petrie was probably a more regular and systematic trainer, but he apparently trained chiefly for his own diocese of Moray and Ross.

loyal recruit remained to the last faithful to his colours. Mr. Bruce was a genial, homely, and warm-hearted specimen of the old school. The writer had a long conversation with him a few weeks before his death, when he told the above anecdote, and many other interesting incidents regarding Mr. Skinner.

Official and Semi-Official Influence.

How long Mr. Skinner held the office of Dean of Aberdeen the writer has not been able to ascertain. In those days the Dean never took or received the title in any form, except on occasions of unusual importance. Ordinarily he was plain *Mister* or the *Rev.* The first occasion on which Mr. Skinner appears in the character of Dean is (as appears from the minute book of the diocese) at a "Presbytery"* meeting, when "Mr. Skinner, as Dean, took the chair." This was on

* The meeting of the "Presbytery" was a meeting of the Presbyters of the diocese for diocesan work in the absence of the Bishop. Skinner presided as "Dean" at another "Presbytery" in the following year (August 18, 1790). Both these "Presbyteries" were held at Aberdeen about the time at which the Synod usually met in those days, and therefore they were not merely local or sectional meetings of the clergy. The "annual meetings" of the clergy (Bishop Gleig, p. 264) were in most of the dioceses till well into the present century very irregular in many respects. On account of the Bishops being generally non-resident, they were frequently only Presbyterial meetings, and probably they were often called "Presbyteries," even when the Bishop was present and presided at them. The use of Presbyterian titles and customs continued in the Church after, as it had done before the Revolution. Mr. Lunan speaks of his managers as "elders," and the practice was not uncommon among Episcopalians in much later times. In the matter of Synods, the diocese of Aberdeen was far more regular than any other diocese, at least from the accession of Bishop John Skinner. The very first meeting minuted dates from the year after his

August 19th, 1789.* He may have been Dean a good many years before, though nothing occurred to draw attention to the fact. Anyhow, from the time at least of his son's elevation to the Episcopate, he must have been, *de facto*, the second man in the diocese. All his life long he had great sway and influence with his son. And after death his influence lived on in his son, and in his grandson, William, who, between them, held the Bishopric of Aberdeen for three-quarters of a century (1782—1857), holding also the Primacy of the whole Church for the greater part of that time.† As was natural, Bishop John Skinner held all his father's special views (see his Memoir of his Father, pp. 153-174), though, as is usual with a man of the second generation, his hold of them was comparatively lax. Bishop William's hold of them was still laxer; and became more and more so as time and Sanscrit went on sapping their foundations. In fact, neither

elevation, viz., November 4, 1783. But the meeting was not known as a Diocesan Synod till 1787 (August 22), "when," as the minute says, "the Bishop authorised and declared the meeting to be a Diocesan Synod, having given the clergy satisfactory reasons for altering the former mode and title, and reducing the meetings of the clergy to a form more consistent with Episcopal government." Till the year 1793 the Aberdeen clergy had their "meeting" or Synod twice a year.

* The above statement receives official corroboration in the minute of the appointment of Dean Skinner's successor in the office:—"In consequence of the death of the Rev. John Skinner, at Longside, who held the office of Dean to the diocese, the Bishop intimated to the Synod that he had appointed the Rev. William Sangster, at Lonmay, as his successor in that office."—(Minute of the Aberdeen Diocesan Synod of August 19th, 1807.) For this and the extract in the text, the writer is indebted to the Rev. Alex. Harper, Inverurie, Synod Clerk of the Diocese of Aberdeen.

† Bishop John Skinner was Primus from 1788 to 1816; Bishop William Skinner from 1840 to 1857.

of these excellent prelates was of the true Hutchinsonian type. They were of a very practical cast of mind, and had nothing in them either of the imaginative and speculative element, or of the enthusiasm for Hebrew scholarship, which distinguished the lively Longside pastor. Yet, so far as appears, neither son nor grandson ever actually disbelieved, still less disavowed, any of the ancestral views, and thus the views never ceased during their protracted sway to have a certain countenance and currency in the north.

The Nature and Extent of his Influence.

Of course, while the extent of Mr. Skinner's influence is shown by the spread of his peculiar views, no sensible man would estimate its real depth and weight by such indications. Peculiarities indicate the breadth, but not the depth of the stream of influence, just as the fringe of mud marks the limit to which the swollen river has extended, but not the depth or volume of the current. While teaching some peculiar views, Mr. Skinner taught along with them all the doctrines of "the faith once delivered to the saints," and particularly those to which his Church bore special witness. He was always the first to stand forth in the Church's defence, and draw on himself the enemy's fire. And then the spread of his most doubtful views carried with it always undoubted indirect advantages. His promotion of Hutchinsonianism involved

His Promotion of the Study of Hebrew.

To teach Hutchinsonianism was indirectly to teach Hebrew. All Hutchinsonians—English, Scotch, and

American—were ardent Hebraists, and eager promoters of the study of the sacred languages. Some of the more moderate and clear-sighted amongst them seemed to regard "the revival of Hebrew literature" as the chief advantage that was likely to flow from the movement — notably the American Dr. Samuel Johnson.* Mr. Skinner was the most ardent and enthusiastic of Hebraists. He urged the study of the language with incessant zeal and apparently with the best effect, at least amongst his clerical brethren in the north. The late Mr. Grieve, of Ellon, who was ordained some years before Mr. Skinner's death, used to bear emphatic testimony to his influence in this particular. He (Mr. Grieve) "spoke of all the old ministers as good Hebraists, and despised the younger men" (Letter to writer from Rev. George Sutherland, Portsoy) in comparison, and it was chiefly to Mr. Skinner's influence and example that he attributed the superiority of the older race. Mr. Grieve's account was that the old race of clergy "pored and brooded over the Hebrew text," comparing Scripture with Scripture, and extracting meanings at first hand; and not only the clergy, but laymen also, some of them not belonging to the scholarly or leisured class, came under the sweep of the movement, and took to "poring over" Hebrew.

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* "He thought he saw in the respectable scholars at Oxford, who favoured that author's (Hutchinson's) views, an earnest effort for the revival of Hebrew literature." — (Dr. Beardsley's Life of Johnson, pp. 305-6). Again, Johnson writes to a son of Bishop Berkeley as early as 1756—"I shall do my best to induce as many as I can to study the Hebrew Scriptures."—(*Ibid*, p. 231.)

Hebrew under Difficulties.

Several of the eminent English lay Hutchinsonians were skilled Hebraists, such as Hutchinson himself, William Stevens, and others. Archbishop Tait mentions the case of a Hutchinsonian clergyman, Mr. Knottesford, who taught his coachman Hebrew.* Hebraists in humble life were also to be found in Scotland. There was a turner, named Nicol, belonging to the congregation of Monymusk, at the beginning of this century, who "read Hebrew without the points."† The same little flock contained at the same time other two members who doubtless, like the turner, owed their impulse to the study of Hebrew to the Hutchinsonian movement, and who both attained to distinction as Oriental scholars. The first and the older of the two was the clergyman, the Rev. James Andrew, who was appointed in 1799, but who only remained a short time, removing afterwards to England, where he became Principal of Addiscombe College, and where, in 1823, he published a very creditable "Hebrew Dictionary and Grammar without points."‡ The second was Alexander Nicol, brother of the

* Life of Catharine and Crawford Tait, p. 207.

† The turner removed to Aberdeen in 1814, and had a shop at the south-west corner of Castle Street. He was erudite but eccentric.

‡ The great philological movement of the beginning of the century doubtless produced its effect on Mr. Andrew. He continued to reject the vowel-points, but he abandoned the cardinal Hutchinsonian etymology, namely, the derivation of Elohim. He holds that the word is compounded from *El* and *Haiim*, and means the living God. Dr. Andrew's only son settled in Edinburgh as a physician. His family still reside in Edinburgh, and look back with interest to their grandfather's first charge.

erudite turner, and son of a poor man in the village of Monymusk. After a distinguished course at Marischal College, Aberdeen, Mr. Nicol, by Bishop Skinner's influence, found his way to Oxford, where, in 1822, he became Regius Professor of Hebrew and Oriental Languages, and Canon of Christ's Church. He had the reputation of being the best Oriental scholar in England, and it used to be said of him, by his friends, that he could "speak his way to the Wall of China."*

Presbyterian Hutchinsonians and Hebraists.

Hutchinsonianism was of no particular Church. "Several distinguished divines of the Episcopal and

* It is said that Dr. Nicol was, to the full, as modest as he was learned, and that when the office of Professor of Oriental Languages became vacant, he was so far from aspiring to it that he never even dreamt of the possibility of its being offered to him. Hence, when Lord Liverpool sent him a letter (June 19th, 1822) offering him the appointment, solely, as his lordship stated, on account of "the high reputation you have acquired as an Oriental scholar, and the value attached to your labours," the humble scholar "made no sign!" He thought the letter a hoax! and carried it about for several days unheeded, till something occurred to persuade him of its genuineness. He held the appointment only for six years, dying on September 24th, 1828, at the age of 36—the victim of hard study, or "the dust of the Bodleian." Dr. Nicol was succeeded by Dr. Pusey, who held the appointment 54 years. Nicol is said to have preached the longest sermon that was ever delivered in the Oxford University pulpit, the subject being "Sacrifice," and the text from the fourth chapter of Genesis.

A member of the Monymusk congregation, Mrs. Cruickshank, Pitfichie, aged 87, remembers Professor Nicol very well, and also his brother. She says that the Professor's death was not attributable solely to hard study, but partly at least to a sudden shock of grief, he having found his wife dead beside him in bed on the morning after his

Presbyterian Churches of England and Scotland" * embraced it. Who the Presbyterian Hutchinsonian divines were is not clear, but, doubtless, they were to be found amongst those who read and taught Hebrew without the points. That there were such Presbyterian divines in Scotland towards the end of last and the beginning of the present century is well known. The late Lord Campbell, who in his youth studied divinity at St. Andrews, says, "I began the study of Hebrew under Dr. Trotter, who taught the language according to Wilson's Grammar, without the 'points,' which he concurred in denouncing as a modern corruption of the text of the Old Testament." †

Of Presbyterian Hutchinsonian laymen, however, there is one very distinguished example, viz., the Right Hon. Duncan Forbes, of Culloden, Lord President of the Court of Session. In Vol. II. of his works,‡ in a "Letter to a Bishop concerning some important discoveries in Philosophy and Theology," Forbes left a very clear and full exposition of the

marriage. He never recovered his spirits or his elasticity of mind after this startling bereavement. The last time Nicol was in Scotland he called on this lady's husband. Cruickshank did not recognise his old rustic schoolfellow in the polished Oxford Professor. "What," said Nicol, "don't you remember *Dawson Girds?*" This was the sobriquet by which Nicol had been known amongst his schoolfellows, in consequence of his fondness for trundling a hoop or *gird*. Amongst the honours which Nicol won at Marischal College was "the silver pen."

* "Encyclopædia Britannica," eighth edition—*sub voce*, Hutchinson.

† Life of Lord Campbell, vol. i., p. 24.

‡ These works, in two volumes, have no date, but probably they were published a few years after the death of the author, which took place in 1747. The Letter to a Bishop was published separately in 1736. "Letter to a Bishop, &c. Edinburgh: Printed by R. Fleming, and sold by most Booksellers in Town. MDCCXXXVI. Pp. 48."

Hutchinsonian views, far clearer, in fact, and more readable than any of Hutchinson's own expositions. President Forbes is a very distinct instance of a man led by Hutchinsonianism to a careful study of Hebrew and of the Hebrew Scriptures. Having met with Hutchinson's works, he was greatly struck with them, but felt that he had not the learning that was necessary for a trustworthy judgment of their merits. He therefore consulted "learned men of his acquaintance," Hebrew scholars and natural philosophers; but from them he found no help nor satisfaction. They had not carefully examined the works, and did not believe them worth a careful examination. Thus driven back upon himself the President trusted to himself. He "rubbed up the little Hebrew he had, and addressed himself to a careful perusal of the books" (Works II., p. 9). He "rubbed up" to some purpose, if, as is related in his history, he read the whole Hebrew Scriptures over eight times! Anyhow, there can be no doubt that the impetus towards careful Biblical study, which he received from Hutchinsonianism, was of infinite indirect advantage to him. His works convey an excellent impression of his character.

Hebrew from the Counter-Movement.

Hutchinsonianism could not be either established or refuted without a knowledge of Hebrew. Opponents of the theory therefore had to study the sacred language as diligently as the advocates of it; nay, neutral inquirers also, who wished to form an intelligent judgment on the subject. In Mr. Skinner's

correspondence reference is made to three persons—two of them scholars of eminence—who learned Hebrew late in life, with one or other of the latter two objects, but chiefly, it would appear, for the purpose of refuting the theory. In a letter to Mr. Skinner (February 13, 1796) Dr. Doig, Stirling, plainly intimates that the latter was his object; and Mr. Skinner, in reply, states that he knew that this was the object of one of his own clerical brethren, and also, as he had been told, "of an English Bishop of great conspicuity." Nay, he seems to include himself in the number of would-be refuters; but he read to scoff, but lived to applaud—the more he studied even anti-Hutchinsonian works, the more Hutchinsonian he became.

Thus the Hutchinsonian movement stimulated alike advocates, opponents, and neutral inquirers to a closer study of the original text of Scripture, and hence, directly or indirectly, it led to a deeper insight into its meaning. It directly promoted piety and devotion,* and indirectly it helped forward the cause of sound learning. It fostered a spirit of inquiry,† and thus kept the way open for scientific criticism.

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* The example of that exemplary Hutchinsonian layman, William Stevens, shows how the Hebraistic movement was made conducive to devotional purposes in compliance with the Church's rule. "Whenever he (Mr. Stevens) went to visit in the country, he carried with him his Hebrew Bible and Greek Testament, and uniformly read the lessons for the day before he left his chamber in their original languages."—(Stevens' Life, by Sir James Allan Park, p. 58.)

† The value of continual fresh expositions of Scripture for "preventing divinity from becoming artificial, and helping to keep it fresh and pure," is urged by Bacon—(Advancement of Learning, Book II., "Quarterly Review," 1873)—and by many other earnest men, such as

The good effects of the movement have been lasting; the bad effects long ago ceased and determined, for never was there a more complete specimen of a dead controversy or "extinct volcano" than Hutchinsonianism. In regard to it the light that arose in the East soon completely dispelled the mists of error.

The Incorrigibles.

It was not to be expected that the older race of Hutchinsonians should ever yield up one iota of their belief, or pay the slightest respect to the arguments of scientific philologists. They would not have listened to such teachers. The late Dr. Pratt, of Cruden, used to tell with unction some anecdotes illustrative of their sternly uncompromising dogmatism. As a newly-ordained Deacon, Mr. Pratt, who was then at Stuartfield, waited upon his neighbour, Mr. Sangster, of Lonmay—then Dean of Aberdeen. The aged Hutchinsonian "eyed the Deacon without speaking for a minute or two, and then opened up. 'Hev ye read the works of John Hutchinson, *Esquire*, sir?' (a strong emphasis on Esquire). 'No, sir.' 'The works of Julius Bate?' 'No, sir.' 'Holloway's Originals?' 'No, sir.' Here the venerable and inveterate Hutchinsonian lost all patience, and gave free vent to his contempt. 'Ye're nae far throu'" *

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the late Bishop Samuel Wilberforce, even when blaming greatly the prevailing style of exposition in their own age. "Indolent and careless acquiescence in traditional views" is the least hopeful sign.

* This and the following anecdotes are given almost wholly in the words of Dean Ranken—(Letter to Writer, November 13, 1880)—who had often heard Mr. Pratt repeat the anecdotes.

Only an Aberdeen man can comprehend the crushing contemptuousness of this oracular deliverance. Not to know John Hutchinson, *Esquire*, argued the Deacon himself unknown and unknowing—ignorant of the very elements of true Biblical exegesis—"no theologian." But this was not the whole, nor the worst. Mr. Pratt mentioned that he was going to Fraserburgh to pay his respects to Bishop Jolly, at that time probably the only anti-Hutchinsonian clergyman of any standing in the north. "Oh, yea!" (ou, yay!) said Sangster, "he'll teach you the Bull heresy" [Bull pronounced like dull or skull]. Bishop Bull, the great English expounder and defender of the doctrine of the Eternal Generation of the Son, was a great favourite with Bishop Jolly, who regarded his teaching as "the true primo-primitive doctrine." But with the Hutchinsonians, Bull's exposition of the difficult doctrine was the Bull heresy. Bishop Jolly, therefore, as an abettor of the same, was not a safe guide!

The Last of the Hutchinsonians.

It was a very common plea with the Hutchinsonians that whether their views were true or false, they were at least innocuous, having no tendency to make them either worse Christians or worse Churchmen than their neighbours. There was much truth in this plea. Those who used it were generally ardent defenders of the great doctrines of the faith. If there was heresy in their explanation of mysterious points, there was no heretical pravity in their hearts. If they held τὰ ἁιρετικὰ, they held their καθολικῶς. Neither, till a late stage of the movement, did any practical dif-

ficulty emerge in connection with it. For long the only cause of dissension arose from the intolerance of the more ardent Hutchinsonians, who could not help looking down upon their dissident brethren as men still walking in darkness.* Towards the close of the movement, however, when there was a revival of strictness in the observance of rubrics and standards, it became clear that, speculative as the Hutchinsonian views were, they had yet a practical bearing, and touched the circle of Church services in at least one point.

The Athanasian Creed—The Longside Farmer.

When towards the middle of the present century, Mr. Low, Longside, in accordance with the recommendation of Bishop William Skinner, introduced the reading of the Athanasian Creed in the public service of the Church, he found among his people a stubborn objector. An aged farmer, mindful of the teaching of his early days, insisted that the venerable Creed was too unsound for recitation in Church. At first Mr. Low defended the Creed, but to no purpose. He then fell back on the Bishop's authority; the Bishop had enjoined the practice. But the farmer, nothing abashed, appealed from the grandson to the grandfather. "I can tell ye," he said, "if his grandfather had been livin', he would ha' never dared to enjoin onything o' the kin'."

* Bishop Skinner admits that his father sometimes appeared to lay himself open to a charge of this sort, expressing himself in such a way that "some of his acquaintances were almost led to suspect that, in his opinion, there was hardly any such thing as Christian truth to be seen in the world, at least in the later ages of it, till brought to light by the writings of Mr. Hutchinson."—(Memoir, p. 174.)

Mr. Murdoch, Keith.

Dean Ranken is disposed to regard this clergyman, who died in 1848, as the last of the Hutchinsonians. He was an uncompromising opponent of the Athanasian Creed. Mr. Ranken called upon him somewhere about 1832. "It came out," says the Dean, "in course of conversation, that I had lately taken to saying the Athanasian Creed. The old man took me roundly to task as a presuming, innovating novice, and told me frankly he had never used it, and never would, inasmuch as he did not believe in it."* Of course in a matter of this sort, and with a man of Mr. Murdoch's venerable years, there was not the least likelihood of compulsion being resorted to. And there were no younger men in like case. The movement was all but extinct.

* Letter of Dean Ranken to Writer, November 13, 1880.

CHAPTER X.

His Theological Works—Letters to the "Anti-Jacobin Review"—Treatise on the Shechinah—English Hutchinsonians' opinion of same—Exposition of the Song of Solomon—General principle of interpretation—Examples: The Shem-al, En-ged-i—The roes and hinds of the field—Jehovah Tzebâôth—Ingenious emendation—Letters to Candidates for Holy Orders—Dissertation on the Trinity—Eternal Generation of the Son—Hutchinsonianism a defensive movement—Respected accordingly.

His Theological Works.

MOST of Mr. Skinner's theological works were produced in the calm evening of his life, when trial and trouble had ceased, and he saw "his children's grandchildren, and peace upon Israel." But for the leaven of Hutchinsonianism, these works might have been very useful and popular in the Church. To most Churchmen, however, at least outside the north-eastern district of Scotland, Hutchinsonianism formed an undoubted stumbling-block. They thought the theory at least fanciful and ill-grounded. Then there was no longer the compensating support of a narrow but ardent circle of sympathisers. The fervour and interest had died out of the movement. That stage of progress had been reached when people did not care to argue either for or against the once-burning questions, and a work on the subject fell on the theological public like a spent ball.

It must be remembered that not only did Mr. Skinner write these works in his latter days, but also that, with one exception, they were not published till after his death, though, as was common at the time, they had been freely circulated in manuscript amongst his literary friends, both in Scotland and in England.

Letters to the "Anti-Jacobin Review."

These letters formed the only one of our author's theological works that was published in his latter days. It was written at the request of certain English friends of Bishop Skinner, in answer to a sceptical work on "The Resurrection and the Future State," by one Richard Amner. The author threw his remarks into the form of a couple of letters, addressed to the editor of the "Anti-Jacobin Review," and signed "A Caledonian Curate." The letters did not, however, appear in the "Anti-Jacobin." The editor thought them "of too great length for the ordinary Review," and so he published them "in a volume, which he called the 'Spirit of the Age.'" The English friends who suggested the "Letters" regarded them as a "spirited vindication of one of the most essential Articles of the Christian creed."

*Treatise on the Shechinah.**

The first draft at least of this treatise dates from the year of Mr. Skinner's imprisonment (1753), and it was the fruit of an anti-Jewish movement somewhat

* The Shechinah is no regular Biblical word, though it is formed from one (שכן), and expresses very conveniently an important Biblical fact, viz., the visible abiding Majesty of Jehovah between the Cherubim

of the same nature as the present Jüdenhätze of Germany and Russia. In June, 1753, an Act was passed "to permit persons professing the Jewish religion to be naturalised by Parliament." A clamour was instantly raised. There would be an influx of Jews into Britain that would swamp the Christian population. The country would be ruined. The consequence was that the obnoxious Act was repealed "the very next session." This settled the question for the time. But it is seldom that a whole people

Own no argument but force.

It was felt that the Jews ought chiefly to be met and resisted by moral weapons. Mr. Skinner believed that his interpretation of the Old Testament Scriptures was a new and most effective weapon against them. The Jews' great claim to superiority over the Christians was their possession of the Shechinah, or abiding glory of Jehovah in their midst, when their Church was fully organised and equipped. Mr. Skinner's argument in this treatise is that they had no superiority in this respect at all, as the same glory abides continually in the Christian Church also. On the strength chiefly of Hutchinsonian etymologies, he maintains that the Divine presence in the old dispensation was the Logos or Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. He was "the glory in the midst of" His people from the beginning. It was He who "inhabited the Cherubim at the east of Paradise," who "stood upon Jacob's Ladder," who

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on the Mercy Seat in the Tabernacle and in the First Temple. It is only, however, by a somewhat bold figure that the word can be applied to any abiding divine presence in Christian times. St. Chrysostom said that the true Shechinah was *man*.

"dwelt between the Cherubim" in the Tabernacle and in the First Temple, who "was seen by Ezekiel standing over the Cherubim, and by St. John standing upon a throne." He also it was who, while tabernacling in the flesh, "manifested forth His glory" by working beneficent miracles, and He, the argument ran, it is who in the Church now is ever present "in the sacred symbols of bread and wine" in the Holy Eucharist, a presence "not properly in the Sacrament, but *in the Church by the Sacrament*," "the Divinity inhabiting, dwelling, residing upon" "the elements," "as he inhabited the Cherubim," &c.

In Mr. Skinner's argument, broadly stated, all Christians will agree. Christ, the Logos, is ever present in the Church now to bless and to save to the uttermost. And even those who cannot follow his argument, but think his speculations fanciful and his analogies strained, may yet find interest and edification in the work. His reasoning, when not convincing, is often highly suggestive. He frequently throws striking side lights on his subject.

The English Hutchinsonians on the Treatise.

The treatise was circulated in manuscript amongst the author's friends in England, and was read by Mr. (afterwards Bishop) Horne, and by Holloway, author of the "Originals." Mr. Holloway did not agree with the main argument of the work, namely, the identification of the Divine presence of old "between the Cherubim," with the "symbolic invisible" presence in the Blessed Sacrament, "because," he said, "the Shechinah implies a really outward and visible glory,

to which *symbolic* and *invisible* is a contradiction." Nevertheless, he, "on the whole, commended the work," and thought that, "with the proper corrections," it would "be demonstrative of 'the author's' great parts, piety, and might in the Scriptures, and would do good service to the Church."*

Exposition of the Song of Solomon.†

This was Mr. Skinner's favourite work. He evidently regarded it as his masterpiece. The mystical character of the Song offered unbounded scope for Hutchinsonian interpretations, and our expositor took full advantage of the liberty. His exposition of the eight short chapters extended, with the introduction, to upwards of four hundred pages. So far as the writer knows, this was the only extended Hutchinsonian exposition of the Song, and it may be said that everything that is distinctive in it, is due to the application of that theory. Without, indeed, some new exegetical theory, it would have been difficult to add anything fresh in the way of spiritualising the Song. The primitive and mediæval commentators —from Origen to Bernhard, of Clairvaux, and his followers—had left little to be done in that line, and they had found abundance of imitators. The licence of mystical interpretation had indeed become so notorious that even a sober critic like Bishop Jebb could say in regard to it, that "the final cause of Canticles was that it might be a field where

* Posthumous Works, vol. ii., pp. 122-3.

† "An Essay towards a literal or true radical exposition of the Song of Songs, which is Solomon's."

mysticism might disport itself."*

The allegorical expounders had probably hardly left a sentence or clause of a sentence into which they had not read a spiritual meaning. But the Hutchinsonian principle enabled an expositor to go a step beyond this, and put a spiritual meaning into separate words and syllables! Mr. Skinner held that in Scripture every word "has its particular intent beside the general scope." Root-words, or single syllables, were included in this affirmation, as will be presently seen.

2. Further, our expositor went beyond all his predecessors in disregarding entirely all restraints upon interpretation of an outward or formal nature. The strictest allegorists seem to have held that the Song must contain a secular narrative of some sort to enshrine the spiritual meaning. It was a pastoral poem or drama, or a song or set of songs narrating the continuous actings of certain characters of the Solomonic period—Solomon and Shulamith—Pharaoh's daughter, or a country maiden—with certain other interlocutors. Mr. Skinner repudiated all such secular literary machinery. "On the very face of this poem," he says, pp. 145-6, "it is visible that it observes neither order nor method, is constructed on no pastoral model, and confined to no dramatic rules, but is wholly made up of *rhapsodies* or . . . of raptures, broken but descriptive exclamations or acclamations to and from the *two* speakers, and looks backward and forward wildly, dare I say, and ecstatically, into the various states of conscience between the great, the

* Correspondence with Knox, i., p. 305.

gracious hero and his happy beloved." The "hero" is Christ, and "the happy beloved" is His Church. The disjointed converse of the two interlocutors, though veiled in secular phraseology, has reference solely to spiritual and Christian interests. There is no primary plot or narrative running through it, or connecting it with the Solomonic period, nothing in it contemporaneous, nothing Jewish.

Now, if to these free principles of interpretation there is added the entire disregard of the vowel points, it was almost inevitable that the result should be a free and sometimes a very fanciful rendering. The expositor's imagination could not but run away occasionally with his judgment, and his ingenuity became more conspicuous than his accuracy. Mr. Skinner himself seemed not altogether unconscious of the fact, yet, as might be expected, his most fanciful renderings were those on which he set most store. Writing to Dr. Doig (December 3rd, 1795), he says, "I know you will meet with many things in that little favourite piece of mine which you *justly may* and no doubt will pronounce *fanciful*. . . . But these fancifuls are the result of derivation, not of invention, and I have offered something like grammar and analogy for them. The 'Shem-al' (left hand) for instance, and 'En-ged-i,' . . . the 'Aphriun' (Solomon's chariot), I hope will so far have your approbation, &c. You will observe that I have laboured my interpretation of 'Sabaoth' to a great, perhaps too great length, because I herein differ from all my Hutchinsonian masters."* The instance of "Sabaoth," as will be

* Memoir, pp. 127-8.

seen, differs entirely from the other instances referred to, which are cases of extreme Hutchinsonian interpretation.

The Shem-al.

The Shem-al, as our expositor transliterates the Hebrew word for left hand, forms a very distinct instance of the Hutchinsonian power of transformation. A very simple passage, "His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me" (Cant. ii. 6), is made by etymological transfiguration to yield a very deep and complex signification. Nothing could be more simple or obvious than the natural meaning of the words, whether taken in the literal or in the spiritual sense. They express plainly and forcibly "the great and gracious hero's" devotion to his "beloved." But this was not enough for our enthusiastic expositor. He would bring out better the deep and essential spirituality of the sentence by means of "the particular intent" of the words. He asks "why both left hand and right hand are here mentioned, and that in different attitudes, and for different ends?" There was no difficulty about "his right hand embracing her." The action here was natural. It was only the action of the left hand that required explanation. This our author supplies in an etymological argument, which extends over three pages. *Shem* is "name." *Al* is "God." The words for under my head (transliterated), *tahat le roshi*, may be rendered "instead of, or for my head." The whole passage becomes—"The NAME, the Irradiator, is—or may he be, the head of the Church, &c., and the Adonai . . . may he embrace her." *

* Posthumous Works, ii., p. 230.

En-gedi.

The transformation of En-gedi exhibits a yet more violent *tour de force.* En-gedi is not the Kid's eye or the Kid's fountain; but En-ged-i my *En-ged* (what the coriander colour represents to me), *be-Carm-i* in my vineyard (see the Hebrew text of Numbers xi. 7). In plain language, "my beloved is my propitiation, he is my manna, my heavenly nourisher, in my course of labouring to cultivate *my* formerly neglected vineyard."*

The above are manifestly extreme specimens of the Hutchinsonian exegesis. They show how a plain text may, in good faith, be distorted.

Before proceeding to give specimens of the author's more legitimate expositions, one other and less violent sample of Hutchinsonian transformation may be added.

The Roes and the Hinds of the Field.

The adjuration (Cant. ii. 7) "By the roes and by the hinds of the field," Mr. Skinner thought was never meant to be taken in this its obvious sense. It was "to be doubted if an inspired writer would have debased the sacred solemnity of adjuring by such a mean-looking form as this appears to be." And so after an etymological discussion of about twenty pages, he suggests, as the true rendering—"I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, whether you be בצבאות in your sacred assemblies or ministrations (at the door), or באילות השדה in among the trees (hinds) of the field, your rural secular occupations, that you stir not up, nor awake my love till he please."

* Posthumous Works, ii., p. 201.

It will be admitted that, in Mr. Skinner's theory of the work, at least this is a more suitable form of adjuration than that which the literal meaning supplies. But even to most Hutchinsonians the argument in support of it probably appeared more ingenious than convincing.

Jehovah Tzebâôth.

The valuable matter in this, as in our author's other mystical expositions, is to be found chiefly in his notes and digressions. In these he sometimes laid his Hutchinsonianism aside, and grappled with a difficult question in the most regular and legitimate way. For instance, in discussing the meaning of the word *Tzebâôth*, he devotes fifteen pages to the determination of the true significance of the oft-recurring title *Jehovah Tzebâôth*. This he maintains — in opposition to perhaps the whole body of divines of his day, not excepting his much-revered masters in exegesis, Hutchinson and Bate—does not indicate the Almighty's "universal dominion over all the hosts of heaven and earth, but simply his leadership of the hosts (δυναμεις *Sept.*) of the Tribes of Israel. His proof rests, not on any fanciful etymologies, but on the *use* of the phrase both in the historical and in the prophetic books.

Ingenious Emendation.

Another specimen of legitimate criticism is our author's attempt to remove a serious difficulty in the text of I. Samuel vi. 19 by an ingenious conjectural emendation. In the text, as we have it at present, it

is said that the Lord smote "fifty thousand and threescore and ten men of the people of Beth-Shemesh "because they had looked into the ark of the Lord." In view of the presumably small size of Beth-Shemesh, the number of the slain certainly constitutes a difficulty. Mr. Skinner shows how very easily, by the carelessness of a transcriber, a very great error may have crept into the text, by the simple act of adding an *m* to the end of one Hebrew word instead of the beginning of the next—a thing very likely to happen in the days of close writing—an enormous change would be produced in the numbers. They would be raised, by this little transposition, from seventy to fifty thousand and seventy!* The explanation, it may be safely assumed, was wholly original on Mr. Skinner's part, although it had been suggested by Bochart† many years before. It indicated, no doubt, the right reading of the numbers of the text (seventy, instead of fifty thousand and seventy), also a possible, though not probably the right mode of emendation. A yet simpler explanation of the difficulty has been found, which also attributes the error to a transcriber's

* "This numeration in Hebrew, שבעים איש חמשים אלף איש in our letters, *sboim aish hmshim alp aish*, literally as thus distinguished 'seventy persons, fifty thousand persons or men.' All therefore I propose is to take the *m* from the word *hmshim* (which, with it, is 'fifty,' without it is 'five,' and prefix it to the next word *alp*, thus *hmshi malp aish*, which will make the whole numeration to be—seventy men, five out of a thousand men, stating the last number as explanatory of the first, and thereby giving the whole number of the inhabitants of Beth-Shemesh to be fourteen thousand," &c.—Vol. ii., p. 491.

† Samuel Bochart (1599-1667), a native of Rouen, and successively a pupil of two eminent Scotch scholars, Thomas Dempster and John Cameron. He was a man of prodigious learning.

blunder, a slight change in a letter making the enormous change in the numbers.*

These two specimens show what Mr. Skinner was capable of when he threw aside the trammels of theory, and proceeded on sound and sober principles of criticism. It is impossible on reading them not to regret that he did not prosecute the study of Biblical criticism under better auspices, and with better opportunities.†

The "true and radical exposition" was highly applauded by the author's Hutchinsonian friends in England, but it was impossible to induce the general theological public to take an interest in the discussion of such views. Apart from the Hutchinsonianism, the exclusively mystical and wholly Christian interpretation contended for—the making, as the "British Critic"

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* In the old Hebrew writing the letter that denotes "seventy" is so similar to the one which denotes "fifty thousand," that the one might easily be mistaken for the other. Further, two excellent old Hebrew MSS. have been found which omit the 50,000 altogether, and merely give 70 men as the number killed.—(See Speaker's Commentary *in loco.*)

† There is nothing in Mr. Skinner's writings or in his history to indicate that he was acquainted with the learned works on Biblical criticism which were published on the Continent during the time that he was engaged in the composition of his own critical works. This is greatly to be regretted. A knowledge of those works might have had the effect of diverting his critical studies into a more practical channel. Whatever their merits or defects, those works grappled with real Biblical problems—difficulties of a literary and historical nature which are embedded in the sacred narrative, and which it is the bounden duty of the Biblical critic to face. It seems difficult to realise the fact that the work of Astruc—the very existence of which seems to have hardly been known in this country till within the last twenty or thirty years—was published in 1753, the year of Mr. Skinner's imprisonment.

said, "the whole treat of Christ and the Church, *without any other reference*" *—seemed to be regarded by all but a limited theological circle as at least a very extreme view. Dr. Doig, of Stirling, with whom the author discussed the subject in a lengthy correspondence, partly in Latin, partly in English, took a diametrically opposite view of the nature of the Canticles. To him the work appeared to be nothing but an Eastern pastoral, and hardly worthy of a place in the sacred Canon.† But while the doctor differed from the expositor entirely as to the nature of the work expounded, and the method of exposition, he did ample justice to the learning, talent, and piety displayed in the exposition. "The piece appears to me," he says (p. 136), "a striking monument of your piety, learning, industry, ingenuity, and extensive and accurate acquaintance with the oracles of truth."‡

Letters Addressed to Candidates for Holy Orders.

Under the above title was published, amongst Mr. Skinner's posthumous works, the substance of two of his theological treatises, viz., the "Declaration of

* "British Critic" for 1812, No. xxxix, p. 336.

† Memoir, p. 118—"Mihi quidem carmen illud nihil aliud quam *Bucolicum* orientale videtur esse vixque libris sacris annumerandum." The doctor seemed pretty familiar with the learning of the day illustrative of the work, and his reading supplied him with arguments against the mystical interpretation. "Neither Christ nor his Apostles quote it, nor do the Targums exhibit it as a Spiritual Song, so far as I recollect. Philo Judæus is an allegorical writer, but he makes no mention of the Canticum Canticorum, nor do any of the Rabbins whom I have seen intimate any such idea as its mystical meaning." —Memoir, p. 134.

‡ Perhaps the most satisfactory theory of the Canticles is that of

Faith," referred to in Chapter VIII., and a "Dissertation on the Trinity." The two treatises were incorporated in one, because the doctrine of the Trinity was expounded in both, and it would have been needless repetition to have printed both of the expositions at length. It would have been wiser, however, to have kept the treatises separate, making the necessary omissions in the second. The one treatise consisted mainly of views of doctrine peculiar to the time, the other of divine truths for all time.

The Dissertation on the Trinity

Was written in the year 1795, in consequence of a controversy which sprung up in the diocese of Oxford on the subject of the Eternal Generation of the Son of God. Mr. Hawtrey, vicar of Bampton, published a pamphlet in which he maintained, as Mr. Skinner had always "strenuously" done, that the Logos or Second Person of the Blessed Trinity was not called the Son till he was born as man into the world, and that this generation as man was the only generation that was ever predicated of Him. Bishop Skinner sent his father a full account of the controversy, and knowing how thoroughly versed he was in the subject, urged

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Delitzsch, who makes it not an allegory, but merely a typical representation of Christ and the Church. "Solomon is a type of Him of whom it can be said 'a greater than Solomon is here' (Matt. xii. 12). Referred to Him, the antitype, the earthly contents receive a heavenly import and glorification. We see therein the mystery of the love of Christ and His Church shadowed forth, *not allegorically, but typically.* The allegory has to coincide throughout with that which is represented, but the type is always only a type *subtractis subtrahendis,* and is exceedingly surpassed by the antitype." — Delitzsch's Commentary, Introduction, pp. 3-4.

him to enter the lists in support of Mr. Hawtrey. Mr. Skinner agreed, and set to work on a treatise on the subject, but before he had got his materials into shape Mr. Hawtrey died, and the controversy dropt. Mr. Skinner nevertheless completed his treatise, which, however, was not published till after his death. From the circumstance, it might justly have been termed a treatise on

The Eternal Generation of the Son of God.

This question, indeed, forms the chief point of interest in it for a modern reader. It is fully and freely argued from all the different points of view, and with much learning and acuteness. The reader sees in it distinctly what was Mr. Skinner's view of the question, and the grounds on which he supported it. The view is probably very different from what the great majority of Churchmen conceived it to be. It seems to have been usually stated in a way that was almost certain to be misunderstood, namely, as a denial of the eternal generation of the Son of God. To most Churchmen this appears to have generally conveyed the idea of some form of Arianism, or the heresy that the Second Person of the Trinity was not generated as God from all eternity, but only *in time* —some time "before the worlds." This is the account which is given of Mr. Skinner's view by the leading English theological review of the period, the "British Critic." The reviewer states Mr. Skinner's "opinion" as "that of the *ante-mundane*, but not eternal generation of the Son of God."* It would have greatly

* "British Critic" for 1812, vol. xxxix., p. 335. No doubt the

shocked the good man to have seen such an "opinion" ascribed to him without note or qualification. He admitted an *ante-mundane* dedication of the Logos to the office of Redeemer, which was, in a sense, a "generation" into another condition of being;* but any real generation of Him *as God*, "*ante-*

reviewer was misled by a hasty perusal of Mr. Skinner's discussion (Letter V.) of the clause in the Nicene Creed, "Begotten of the Father before all worlds." This begetting Mr. Skinner explained as a sort of figurative "*ante-mundane* generation"—a generation "not in the modern sense of production into being," but in the secondary Scriptural and primitive sense of "a change of condition in a being already existing." The Logos was in this sense "begotten," or dedicated to this office of Redeemer before all worlds. Mr. Skinner dwells on the Scriptural and primitive use of the term, and also traces the history of the clause in the Nicene Creed.

* This explanation was necessary in order to reconcile our author's views with the clause in the Nicene Creed "Begotten of His Father," &c. But "begotten" is a stubborn word. Mr. Skinner confessed that it had given him some trouble in his early days. His friends sometimes cross-questioned him on the subject of it. In the year 1780 Mr. Patrick Sangster, an Edinburgh printer, who had been "one of the lambs of his own flock" at Longside, prompted by Mr. Gleig, Stirling, and others, wrote to him asking how he explained this word in the Creed. Mr. Skinner wrote him in reply two very long letters, which now lie before the writer. In the first letter he explains his view with great fulness, as in Letter V. That letter was shown to Mr. Gleig, who remarked "that the Greek word for 'begotten' may have the signification which Mr. Skinner takes it in, but it cannot have that signification in the Nicene Creed." "How is he sure of that?" says Mr. Skinner in his second letter. "Does he know the sentiments of all the three hundred and eighteen fathers of that Council?—men and but men of various principles, knowledge, and languages. They have used a word which, from Scripture usage, admits of two senses, and have left it unrestrained to either. Why may not I explain it in one sense, as well as he in another!" Mr. Skinner adds that the Arians' admission of the clause "into their Creeds was the first thing that led him out of the common notion of applying it to essence."

mundane" or other, he denied altogether. He maintained that it was only *as man* that he had any real generation at all, and that it was not till He became man that He was known as the Son. Till then He had been the Logos or Word, one of the three "*Aleim* or *Covenanters* (we read it God) by which the one Jehovah is described.* These Three Persons in the one Godhead were from all eternity equal in power, glory, dignity, and majesty. There was no distinction of persons into first, second, and third (which are not Scriptural terms), nor anything to imply, in any way or sense, subordination or inferiority of one to the other."

Mr Skinner claimed for this explanation of the doctrine of the Trinity that while it renders due honour to all the Three Divine Persons, it is "free from any such implications as attach to the scheme of *eternal paternity, eternal generation,* and *eternal procession,* and thus rids at once Scripture and Scripture doctrine of those inconsistencies with which ancient and modern heretics have not failed to charge them."†

Hutchinsonianism as a Defensive Movement.

The last extract proves how thorough was Mr. Skinner's conviction that Hutchinsonianism was the

* Letters to Candidates, &c., p. 6.

† The "British Critic," in reviewing a second tract of Mr. Hawtrey's, acknowledged the truth of his allegation "that great advantage is gained against the Arians by denying that the Eternal Word was the Son till He came into the world."—"British Critic," No. xxxi., 1808.

one great and adequate system of the day for the defence of the faith—especially of the Trinity, the chief and central doctrine. The system did not, he confessed, agree in detail with the accepted Catholic explanation, but then, as he believed, it furnished an adequate alternate explanation, and it obviated some of the leading objections of heretics and sceptics, and placed the whole doctrine on a firmer basis of Scriptural authority. Who could doubt the divinity and eternity of the Word and the Holy Spirit when he finds Father, Word, and Spirit united in one as co-equal "Covenanters" in the first chapter of Genesis! Men like Mr Skinner, who had full faith in the system, could not fail to be its ardent and enthusiastic supporters, while even those who had no faith in it could not but respect the zeal and earnestness, and look tenderly on the vagaries of those who had.

CHAPTER XI.

Closing years—Presented with the "Freedom of the City" of Old Aberdeen—Receives a visit from Ramsay of Ochtertyre and Dr. Doig, Stirling—Lord Woodhouselee—Chalmers, author of "Caledonia"—Countess of Marshall's dream—Death of Mrs. Skinner—The Rev. John Cumming—Bishop Skinner asks him to go and live with him—Goes—Death—Burial at Longside—Character as a man and a clergyman—As Biblical Critic—As Theologian.

Closing Years and Death.

MR. SKINNER continued to gather fame to the last. His works became known and appreciated, and men from a distance visited him, or wrote to him, or sought in some way or other to do honour to him.

"The Freedom of the City" of Old Aberdeen.

The distinction which was conferred upon him—and at the same time on his son and Bishop—in the autumn of 1789, as duly recorded in the city records,* must, from old associations, have been particularly gratifying to him. It was in the prison of "the old University town" that he spent six solitary months in the year 1753. From their treatment of him, first

"* Rev. John Skinner, minister at Longside, Honorary Burgess of Old Aberdeen, 29th August, 1789; same day, Bishop John Skinner at Aberdeen, his son."—Entry in Records copied for writer by Dr. Grub.

and last, the Old Aberdonians appear to have been proud of their prisoner. They were kind to him while he languished in their midst, and now in his old age they made him one of themselves. It was "freedom" and not "bonds" that they would at all times have meted out to him had they had the choice.

In his *gratatorium*, or Latin "Ode of Thanks," Mr. Skinner acknowledges gratefully and gracefully "the very many and very great marks of friendship" which the *urbs veneranda* had shown him during his six months' enforced presence within it.*

Intercourse with the Stirling Literati.

Mr. Ramsay of Ochtertyre, the prototype of Scott's "Antiquary," corresponded with Mr. Skinner, visited him at Linshart, and, as his manner with his friends was, *iconised* him, or drew a sketch of his character in Latin verse. This sketch or *icon*, entitled "Linshart," he sent to Mr. Skinner in the year 1793, accompanied with a flattering letter, in which he said—"I wish your features and fortune (which are abundantly prominent), were more perfectly delineated. You may perhaps think it too long; but I once thought it impossible to do you under thirty or forty lines. Accept it, with all its imperfections, as a token of my sincere esteem and veneration." (Memoir, pp. 130-1.) The *icon* does full justice to its subject. It expatiates

* Sacra vetustate, et sacrorum sede vetusta,
Accipe nunc grates, urbs veneranda meas;
Tu mihi semestri jampridem in carcere clauso,
Plurima amicitiæ, et maxima signa dabas;
Nunc, tot post annos, animo dignaris amico
Municipes inter, me numerare tuos, &c.

on Skinner's great gifts and merits, his rich vein of wit, his acute and fertile talent, his well-regulated piety, and so forth. He was living as a septuagenarian "*honoribus sane titulisque major*," obeying his son the Primus, with the reverence of a presbyter and the love of a parent. Whether Mr. Ramsay had seen Linshart before writing his sketch is doubtful. Some of his graphic touches would indicate that he had. He certainly saw it two years later.

Mr. Ramsay and Dr. Doig visit Linshart.

In the year 1795 Mr. Ramsay, accompanied by Dr. Doig, Stirling, paid a visit to Mr. Skinner at

Domum istam stramento intectam ;

and, before leaving, the two friends persuaded their social host to go and spend a week with them at Peterhead, then a somewhat fashionable watering place. Three such congenial minds could not but greatly enjoy a week of uninterrupted intercourse and interchange of thought. Mr. Skinner, writing of it afterwards to Dr. Doig, spoke of it as "that Platonic and Epicurean week."

Lord Woodhouselee.

In the year 1806 Mr. Skinner, when rather old to visit or be visited, had an interchange of letters and literary gifts with another Southern aristocratic votary of literature—Alexander Fraser Tytler, Lord Woodhouselee. His lordship, who was as good a judge in literature as in law, praised very highly Mr. Skinner's Latin poetry, especially "the elegiac verses" on the death of Bishop Horsley, "equally admirable in

thought and expression;" "the beautiful lines addressed to your son, the Bishop, prefixed to your excellent 'Ecclesiastical History,'" and "the ingenious translation of 'Chryste Kirk on the Green,' which I have long admired and valued." In concluding his letter, his lordship enclosed "a few trifles" of his own, trusting that Mr. Skinner would in return send him "some of your excellent *jeux d'esprit*, whether in Latin or English"—hoping, he added, in this way to procure for himself, "as Cicero says, *pro asse aureas fabulas*."

Chalmers, Author of "Caledonia."

In the year 1797-8 Mr. Skinner had some correspondence with Mr. George Chalmers, who sought his aid in his quest for materials for his chief work, "Caledonia." Chalmers' system in collecting materials was to send to learned and intelligent friends throughout Scotland lists of names of places to be overhauled and annotated, errors in the lists being corrected by the correspondent, and everything of interest in regard to each place set down by him.* The notes on Mr Skinner's lists, as in the others, are generally descriptive, but they are sometimes etymological and antiquarian. An interesting note occurs under the heading of the Abbey of Deer. It relates an ominous dream which the Countess of

* For the above particulars the writer is indebted to a MS. volume composed of the lists issued by Chalmers, and the letters and corrections of his correspondents. The materials in this volume do not appear to have been ever made use of by Chalmers. For a sight of the volume the writer is indebted to the kindness of David Morice, Esq., advocate, Aberdeen, whose property it now is.

Marshall dreamt a few years before Sheriffinuir, and which her ladyship related in great agitation the following morning at breakfast in presence of a friend of Mr. Skinner's. Her ladyship, like a Countess of Marshall in the previous century, saw in her dream certain individually insignificant agents, hard at work, slowly but surely undermining the foundations of the Marshall family's great stronghold of Dunnottar. In the latter case the agents of destruction were mice, working with their claws; in the former they were monks, digging with "penknyves."* In both cases the seemingly puny and ineffective assailants were understood to be inexorable and sure, though slow avengers of the despoiled ecclesiastics of Deer.

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* Mr. Skinner's note stands thus :—"Abbey of Deer.—The revenues of this Abbey at the Reformation came into the family of Marshall, and I once heard a gentleman say that being at Inverugie about two or three years before Sheriffmuir, and when the Abbey lands had been long out of the 'family's' possession, he saw the Countess of Marshall at breakfast one morning much imprest at having dreamt the night before that she saw the mice of the Abbey of Deer clawing down the walls of Dunnottar, a fortified castle in the Mearns, then belonging to the family, but soon after lost in the general forfeitry." This dream was probably suggested to the mind of the Countess by a recollection of the similar dream of her predecessor. The latter is told with quaint particularity by Patrick Gordon, of Ruthven, in his "Britane's Distemper, from 1639 to 1669."—(Spalding Club, 1844.) It is interesting to compare the two dreams. "This" (the "waisting of all") the Earl of Marshall's "lands" around Dunnottar "with fyre") was a fearfull presaige of the fattall punishment which did hing over the head of that noble familie, fortold by a terrible vission to his grandmother, efter the sacraleidgious annexing of the abacie of Deir to the house of Marshell, which I think not unworthie the rememberance, wer it bot to adwyce other noblemen thereby to bewar of meddling with the rent of the Church. . . . George earle Marshell, a learned, wyse, and wpright good man, got the abacie of Deir in recompence from James the Sixt,

Death of Mrs. Skinner.

Length of days had proved more of an unmixed blessing to Mr. Skinner than it does to most men. He saw his "childrens' grandchildren, and peace upon Israel." He saw the Church at last free and unmolested, and generation after generation of his own family rising to positions of trust and influence in it, and the name of Skinner a household word throughout its pale. But one penalty of advanced age he could not escape. He had to part with all his oldest and dearest friends. The crowning bereavement overtook him in the year 1799 (Sept. 21st), when he lost

for the honorable chairge he did bear in that ambassage he had into Denmerk. . . . This earle George his first wife, dochter to the lord Hom, and grandmother to this present earle, being a woman both of a high spirit, and of a tender conscence, forbids her husband to leave such a consuming moch in his house, as was the sacraleidgious medling with the abacie of Deir ; but fourtein scoir chalderes of meill and beir was a sore tentatione, and he could not weell indure the randering back of such a morsell. Vpon his absolut refusale of her demand, she had this vission the night following :—In her sleepe she saw a number of religious men in their habit cum forth of that abbey to the stronge craige of Dunnotture, which is the principall residence of that familie. She saw them also sett themselves round about the rock to get it down, and demolishe it, having no instruments nor toilles wherewith to perform this work, but only penknyves, wherewith they follishly (as it seemed to her) begane to pyke at the craige. She smyled to sie them intende so fruitles ane interpryse, and went to call her husband to scuffle and geyre them out of it. When she had fund him and brought him to sie these sillie religious monckes at their foolish work, behold, the whole craige, with all his stronge and stately buildings, was by ther penknyves, wndermynded and fallen in the sea, so as ther remained nothing but the wrack of ther riche furnitore and stufe flotting on the waves of a raging and tempestuous sea.

Some of the wyser sort, divining upon this vission, attrebute to the penkyves, the lenth of tym befor this should com to pass."—"Britane's Distemper," pp. 112-13.

his wife. It was no untimely bereavement, for the lady was in her 80th year, and thus was about two years the senior of her husband.* But the loss was not the less severe and trying on that account. It was the loss of the partner and help meet of 58 years—the loss of an ever kindly sympathiser in trial and diligent co-operator in work—and not least in pastoral work. How thoroughly Mr. Skinner appreciated her worth, and how tender his affection for her continued to the last, he never omitted an opportunity of testifying both in prose and in verse. The year before her death he dilates, in an address to his grandson, the Rev. John Skinner, Forfar, on his marriage, on the undiminished happiness of his married life, and "the beauties"

> Of my own once blooming, now decrepit Grace,
> Tottering though both with age, yet both uncloyed
> With sweets, through fifty-seven long years enjoyed.

After her death he paid to her memory a most worthy and fitting tribute in a graceful Latin ode, in which he recalls, with great feeling and tenderness, all that she had been to him from the day when he, a stranger and a youth, first saw and loved her, young and beautiful, in distant Shetland, concluding with a fervent hope and prayer for re-union with her in the blessed choirs above.

Had this ode been written in English instead of Latin it would have been widely read, and have greatly extended and enhanced its author's reputation both as a poet and a man.

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* There is in front of the monument to Mr. Skinner in Longside Churchyard a flat stone to the memory of Mrs. Skinner, on which her age is given as above.

The Rev. John Cumming.

The gloom of Mr. Skinner's bereaved and lonely condition was greatly relieved by the help and companionship of his assistant and successor in the charge, the Rev. John Cumming, who was his own grandson, and lived in the house with him. How great a comfort Mr. Cumming was to him it is not difficult to conceive. He was a man of a very modest, unassuming, conciliatory disposition, and probably he never opposed or contradicted his grandfather in anything.*

Goes to Live with his Son, the Bishop.

The Bishop, ever forward to help and comfort him, could not, at the distance at which he lived, do much to cheer the lonely hours of his bereaved father's closing years. To be an effectual comforter, it was neces-

* Mr. Cumming succeeded his grandfather in the charge of the Longside congregation. There is a memorial window to him in the present Longside Church. He was born in 1770, became Dean of the Diocese of Aberdeen in 1834, on the death of Mr. Shand, of Arradoul (or Buckie), and died in 1849. Even he never on ordinary occasions took or received the title of Dean. The present clergyman of Longside, Mr. Low, lived with him as assistant for about eight years, and he says Mr. Cumming continued Mr. Cumming to the last. The letters and newspapers which he received, even from his clerical neighbours, were always addressed "The Rev. John Cumming." Dean Ranken, who knew him well, says he was generally very reticent, and would seldom say much of "the old man" (as he called his grandfather), except when he performed the operation of shaving, which he did twice a-week. For some occult reason the ice broke on those occasions, and he generally became very communicative. Between them, Mr. Skinner and Mr. Cumming held the charge of Longside for 107 years (1742-1849). Mr. Low has now held it 34 years. These three are the only pastors who have presided over this faithful flock for the last 141 years.

sary that he should be beside him. Both father and son appear to have felt this, and the father had looked forward to the prospect of spending his last days under his son's roof, and having his eyes closed by those much loved hands. The happy arrangement was accomplished, but only at the eleventh hour. Nothing was done to bring it about till the spring of 1807, when Bishop Skinner suffered the same sad bereavement as his father had done. The Bishop then paid his father a visit, and at parting asked him, in the kindest way, to leave Longside and spend the remainder of his days with him in Aberdeen. The venerable parent was greatly gratified and affected, not only by the request, but also by the manner in which it was made. In a few days he sent his son a letter of acceptance—the last letter, probably, he ever wrote. It was couched in terms of warm gratitude and affection. It ran thus:—

My Dear S[on],—If anything had been necessary to increase the affection which I have always had for you, both as a son and a Bishop, it would have been your proposal at parting, and your pathetic way of asking from me a favour, which the doubts and fears I always had prevented my asking from you. So, as you have removed all these, I cordially embrace your proposal, and am making ready to be with you next week. I hope before this reach you you will have your Forfar jewels about you, and I wish much to share in that pleasure, and to see my dear John once more. I hope therefore you will send out a chaise, and a careful driver. . . . Any hole in your house will hold me. . . . . I shall defer particulars till God bless us with a happy meeting. Yours, in grateful affection, Jno. Skinner.*

May 25, 1807.

* The original of the above letter now lies before the writer. Except tremulousness of hand it betrays no sign of age. On the contrary, it is a clear, business-like production. In the Memoir (p. 213),

As arranged, Mr. Skinner arrived in Aberdeen on June 4th, 1807—King George III.'s birthday—in time, as he himself said, to have drunk the King's health at the Town Hall had he been able to go there. He "seemed to enjoy his usual health and spirits, receiving with pleasure the visits of his acquaintances, and amusing them with old stories and anecdotes of men and things almost forgotten in that generation." But this lively state of health lasted only for a week or ten days. The great change in his habits and mode of life, consequent on his removal to town, doubtless told on his aged frame, and it soon became apparent that he had come to Aberdeen only to die. "He began not to complain, for no complaint ever escaped his lips, but to show symptoms of a little tendency to fever, and to feel what he called a palpitation at the heart, and a more than usual difficulty in breathing. This he considered as a gentle warning of the approach of that awful messenger, whose business it soon would be to summon him hence, and was thankful, as he said, for this previous knock at the door, rather than that the harbinger of death should abruptly come in and tell him instantly to remove." The summons came sooner than he anticipated. He had been talking occasionally with his son "of this and that literary pursuit in which they would employ the dreary months of winter," but not even the bright months of summer were for him. "On the 16th of June he had passed the forenoon in reading and conversing as usual, and being told after

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the first part of the letter is given correctly, but for the second part, which is of a rather private nature, there is substituted what may have been the conclusion of a different letter by the same writer.

dinner that it was the birthday of his grand-daughter from Forfar, who, with four of her children, were all about him, he took a glass of wine and water, and grasping her hand, with all the warmth of paternal love, wished many returns of the day, and all happiness to her and hers. After reposing a little while, he felt himself somewhat uneasy, and said he would take a gasp of air in the garden. He had not been there many minutes when his strength seemed to be completely gone, and it was with much difficulty that he was helped into the house, where, being placed in a chair, and supported by his son and others, he calmly closed his eyes, and without the least appearance of struggle, without even a sigh or a groan, expired. This was so literally falling asleep, or had so much the resemblance of a fainting fit, that for some time the usual restoratives were tried, but all in vain. The spirit had left its mortal tenement, never to return to it more, till that grand change take place, when 'this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality.'"

Burial.

According to his own request made to his son, Mr. Skinner's remains were "deposited in the same grave with those of his departed wife"* in Longside churchyard. At the head of the grave stands a monument,

* Then, oh, with joy and comfort from on high,
Let me in Christian quiet calmly die,
And lay my ashes in my Grissel's grave,
'Tis all I wish upon the earth to have!

—*Poetical reply to Mr. Ferguson, Pitfour.*

erected to his memory by the congregation to which he had ministered sixty-four years, with a lengthy inscription, headed by the sacred name, Jehovah, in Hebrew characters. The inscription commemorates the departed pastor's "attainments as a scholar and Scriptural research as a divine," "his pastoral labours," and generally his "talents, acquirements, and character."

After the lapse of about a half century there was raised in Longside a yet more fitting and appropriate memorial to the faithful pastor. The east window of the present very handsome Church of St. John's, erected in 1854,* chiefly by the exertions of the Rev. Alexander Low, was dedicated to his memory. The window, which cost upwards of £100, was the gift of Mr. Skinner's great-grandson, George Skinner, Esq., son of Dean Skinner, Forfar. The inscription on the brass was furnished and, doubtless, composed by Bishop William Skinner, of Aberdeen. It is very chaste and simple, and, as far as decipherable, reads thus :—

In memoriam admodum Reverendi Johannis Skinner per sexaginta quatuor Annos hujus Gregis pastoris—qui natus 1721 obiit 1807.†

It will be observed that, times having changed, Bishop Skinner here gives his grandfather the title "Very Reverend," indicating his status as Dean of the Diocese. In the inscription on the monument in the

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* See Note to this Chapter.

† The last clause of the inscription, which records the dates of Mr. Skinner's birth and death, is given imperfectly, the brass, obscured by the recently erected reredos, being illegible in this part. The dates, however, are well known—October 3, 1721, and June 16, 1807.

churchyard, doubtless written by his son, the Bishop, he is only "Reverend."

The reader who has followed the narrative throughout can now judge for himself what manner of man John Skinner was in all his life and conversation. His character is indeed one which it is not difficult to read, for it stands prominently out* in all his words and works. It is also consistent and congruous throughout. There were probably never two opinions regarding him, either as a man or as a clergyman; and the wide popularity and influence which he so long enjoyed is the best attestation to his general character.

And in his case the greatest general respect was found to be quite compatible with a very wide difference of opinion on certain subordinate points of doctrine which were in those days left open.† Several of Mr. Skinner's most eminent contemporaries differed very widely from him on such matters, and also gave free and frequent expression to their views, yet not one of them seems ever to have doubted of his substantial soundness in the faith, or bated one jot of their respect and regard for him. Bishop Gleig, for instance, held views which were diametrically opposed to Mr. Skinner's on almost every controverted topic of the time, yet no Churchman ever pronounced upon him a higher or worthier eulogium.‡

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* "Your features and fortune, which are abundantly prominent."—Mr. Ramsay of Ochtertyre, as quoted in p. 193.

† The Thirty-Nine Articles were not adopted as the standard of doctrine till the year 1804, only three years before Mr. Skinner's death.

‡ "By the writer of these remarks, with whom, of all his brethren,

As Biblical Scholar.

Mr. Skinner's knowledge of the Holy Scriptures—particularly of the Old Testament—in the original languages was, for his age and opportunities, undoubtedly great and profound, and his zeal for the promotion of the much-neglected study of Hebrew was ardent and enthusiastic. His labours produced good fruit, not so much, however, in direct results as in indirect influences. With the mistaken philological theories and the faulty critical methods of the time, it was impossible to make any real advance in the solution of Biblical problems. It was something, however, to make the attempt, and lead the way in fostering a spirit of original investigation and research, in setting men to "brooding and poring over their Hebrew Bibles."

As a Theologian.

Apart from his Hutchinsonian views, which formed a mere excrescence on his system of doctrine, Mr. Skinner was a sound and sober-minded theologian, mighty in the Scriptures, and ever ready and fluent in exposition. For his circumstances and opportunities, too, his knowledge of the leading authorities in theology, both ancient and modern, was wonderfully extensive and accurate. Then his views were always

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he had perhaps the most earnest controversies, both in theology and in human science, he has often been pronounced the brightest ornament of the Scotch Episcopal Church during the latter half of the eighteenth century, and, in his opinion, Mr. Skinner would have been a very bright ornament of any Church in any country. ὁ λυχνος, ὁ καιομενος, και Φαινων."—Memoir, p. 197.

his own. He thought for himself, inquired for himself, reasoned each question out for himself, and never took anything for granted.

NOTE.

ST. JOHN'S, LONGSIDE.

This handsome church, with the adjoining parsonage, forms a speaking contrast with the humble cottage within sight of it, which, at the period of the Memoir, did duty for both church and parsonage. The church was consecrated on St. Luke's Day (Oct. 18), 1854, and thus, by happy contrast, the consecration formed a pleasing centennial commemoration of the congregation's period of deepest depression, when it had no church, and its pastor was "in bonds."

The character of the church was given in the year of its consecration by a writer in the "Ecclesiologist," who contributed "A critical review of the churches of the diocese of Aberdeen." "We now come," says the writer, "to the last and best of all the examples of church architecture in the diocese—the new church . . . . at Longside . . . . Simple grandeur and true dignity are the leading characteristics of the design. The style is First Pointed in its more advanced stage, but in its severest character." In the year 1875 the church was "enriched with a new stone altar and a magnificent reredos."—"Scottish Guardian," July 30th, 1875.

In connection with this memoir, the neighbouring church of St. James's, Cruden, also presents a happy sign of the changed times. At one period Mr. Skinner seemed to despair of the Church's fortunes in Cruden, and wrote an epitaph for the clergyman, Mr. Keith, in which he spoke of him as the last of his order in the parish—"ultimus in Crudenanis." Yet Keith has "never wanted" a successor "to stand before the Lord," and the congregation was one of the first to erect a church in becoming ecclesiastical style.

ST. JAMES', CRUDEN.

CHAPTER XII.

Character as a poet—His Latin poems—Dr. Doig and Bishop Wordsworth's opinions of same—His facility in composition—Latin ode to Dr. Beattie—His English poems—Different editions—Poems by which the author ought to be judged—His songs—Restricted in his choice of subject—"John o' Badenyon"—"Lizzie Liberty"—His chance of enduring fame.

As Poet.

SKINNER was before all things a poet; a poet first, a critic, a theologian, a historian, and a controversialist afterwards. In all his works the poet presses to the front. The lively imagination predominates, painting in hues of rainbow brightness the favoured speculation of the hour, and making the dry Hebrew roots bud and blossom like the rose. It is as a poet that Skinner is known to his countrymen at large. As a poet he will live. Critical and controversial works are for an age; poetry is for all times. It never waxes old.

His Latin Poems.

Skinner's Latin poems almost equal in bulk his vernacular productions, and, without doubt, an equal if not a greater amount of mental labour and energy was expended upon them. Like his English poems, they are of unequal merit. Some of them, particularly

one poem of eighteen lines, every word of which begins with *m*, are, as modern Latin poems are apt to be, mere intellectual exercises, scholarly feats, marvels of classical ingenuity, poems made "by the wits," and witnessing only to the author's learning and powers of versification. But not a few are true poems, genuine expressions of poetic feeling, thoughts which have been "plunged into the poet's soul."

Dr. Doig and Bishop Wordsworth.

Of these poems, the verdict which was given by the best judges of Skinner's own day is fully confirmed by the best judges of the present day. The very favourable opinion of Lord Woodhouselee has been already quoted. Dr. Doig, Stirling, a yet more learned man, gives a still more favourable and more distinct and detailed opinion. He praises abundantly the artistic finish of certain of the poems, the neatness, elegance, and sweet flow of the versification; but he singles out as their chief and most characteristic merit the poetic force or impetus* that distinguishes them. In other words, the verses had the quality of poetry. They were not "wooden," but had the ring of the true metal.

Dr. Doig's judgment, if not higher, is more specific and pointed than that of Lord Woodhouselee. Compare with the deliverance of these contemporary literary judges that of an equally competent living

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* "Impetu, inquam, *illo poetico*, quo aequales meos. . . . longe longeque mihi videris superare. . . . Vis illa poetica qûâ tantum non omnes superas."—Latin letter of Dr. Doig to Mr. Skinner, Oct., 1794.

authority, Bishop Wordsworth, of St. Andrews, whose classical learning and scholarship, and general literary power are known and recognised on all hands. In his "Discourse on Scottish Church History"* (p. 25-6), the Bishop says:—"His numerous copies of Latin verses, especially his 'Batracho-myo-machia' (notwithstanding some few offences against prosody, which disfigure them here and there), deserve to be classed amongst the most elegant specimens of that kind of composition which have appeared in Scotland since the days of Buchanan and Andrew Melville."

As to the "few offences against prosody," to which the Bishop refers, most of them were probably due to the supposed exigencies of rhyme, or of some peculiar measure. There are several rather glaring specimens of them in the rhymed ode to Dr. Beattie—*e.g.*, the making the diphthong *æ* and the ablative in *â* short. Of course, the author knew how great a licence this was, and in an unrhymed ode he would have most carefully avoided it. But, in little matters of this sort, he was certainly somewhat careless in Latin composition as well as in English, seldom doing his best, and often neglecting finish. He had what Byron calls a "fatal facility," or the faculty of doing a thing with ease, and readiness, and passable finish, off-hand.

Instance of his Facility.

A good instance of his facility is given in Vol. III. of his Posthumous Works (p. 10):—"Happening, when

* "A Discourse on Scottish Church History, with Prefatory Remarks on the St. Giles's Lectures," &c. Blackwood & Sons, 1881.

a very young man, to be reading in a clergyman's house a pamphlet against predestination, and finding at the end of it the following few lines, which pleased him much :—

> Why is this wrangling world thus tossed and torn ?
> Free grace, free will, are both together born ;
> If God's free grace, rule in and over me,
> His will is mine, and so my will is free.

—Skinner immediately called for a bit of paper, pen and ink, and, writing on his knee instead of a table, translated the lines thus :—

> Cur lacerant miserum contraria dogmata mundum ?
> Velle suum cuique est ; Gratia grata manet
> Grata meam ducat Domini si gratia mentem,
> Ejus velle meum est, sic mihi velle libet."

Of Skinner's Latin poems only two specimens are given in the selections—first, the true and touching tribute which he paid to the merits of his departed wife, referred to in last chapter ; and the lively humorous ode, in the style and measure of " Tullochgorum," addressed to Professor Beattie (see Chap. VIII.). In this ode, the poet rallies the dignified Academical Bard, not only on the argumentative defects of his famed " Treatise on Truth," but also on an unfortunate expression which the Professor had, doubtless inadvertently, made use of in his ode on the death of Dr. Gregory—an expression which seemed to imply that its author looked upon death as " an endless sleep."

> O ye who melt at human woe,
> Whose hearts with love of virtue glow,
> Attend and weep, in endless sleep
> The good, the wise,
> The friend of man and virtue lies !

Skinner appears to join in the general chorus of exultation over Beattie's supposed demolition of Hume, but there seems to be a touch of irony in the allusion, and the effect, such as it is, seems to be attributed more to the strength of the Professor's invective than to the force of his arguments—

> Nil nunc curamus Humium
> Astutum dialecticum
> Quem tu monstrâsti infidum
> Et pessimum virorum.

The lively poet winds up his bantering address with a fervent wish that a benignant fate might grant to the eloquent Professor to live on for ever writing books, and teaching the ingenuous youth; but, as that was not possible, the next best thing to hope for him was, that he might become a shade amongst the illustrious dead, or sleep "an endless sleep!"

The above two poems have been selected less on account of their literary merit than of their personal and biographical interest. Besides, Mr. Skinner's most finished classical compositions, such as the "Batracho-myo-machia," and the translation of "Chryste Kirk on the Green," are much too long for a place in this selection.

His English Poems.

Of these, three editions have been published; two of them in 1809, the first forming, along with the author's Latin poems, Vol. III.* of his Posthumous Works; the second appeared without the Latin poems,

* "Verses in the Scottish Dialect, with Songs, Familiar Epistles, Elegies," &c. Edinburgh, 1809.

in smaller print, and with a different preface.* A third edition† was published in 1859 by Mr. W. L. Taylor, Peterhead, prefaced by an interesting and appreciative memoir of the author by Mr. H. G. Reid, then editor of the "Peterhead Sentinel."‡ The last edition contained some interesting poems, or fragments of poems, not contained in the previous editions. As the reader must have gleaned from this narrative, there still remains a considerable number of the author's fugitive productions circulated in manuscript in the Buchan district. His first editors and biographers were by no means zealous collectors. But, on the whole, perhaps, their slackness was preferable to over-zeal. There are even now admirers of Mr. Skinner who advocate a collective edition of all his known poetical works.§ Such a publication would be undoubtedly interesting, at least to a limited circle. But to the departed author, whose name and fame are at stake, it could hardly fail to prove a grievous

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* "Amusements of Leisure Hours, or Poetical Pieces chiefly in the Scottish Dialect," &c. Edinburgh, 1809.

† "Songs and Poems by the Rev. John Skinner, Author of 'Tullochgorum.'" Peterhead: William L. Taylor, 1859.

‡ Mr. Reid, now editor and proprietor of the "Eastern Counties Gazette," Middlesbrough, is a successful author in other walks of literature.

§ The publication of a complete collection of all Mr. Skinner's poems was warmly recommended by a correspondent of the "Aberdeen Free Press" (June 23, 1882), who signed himself "Philoponos," and who, there is reason to believe, was a well-known Aberdeen literary veteran, since deceased, exceptionally qualified by congenial tastes and pursuits to appreciate Mr. Skinner's merits. "Philoponos," who showed his intimate acquaintance with our author's works, pronounced him "a true poet."

injustice. It is known that the author himself refused during his lifetime to consent to such a publication, when requested to do so by a respectable publisher.*

Had he consented then, he could himself have superintended the publication, made his own selection, and revised and retouched each poem to his own satisfaction. Revision is no longer possible,† and it cannot be doubted that the author, if he had a voice in the matter, would now put a decided veto on the indiscriminate publication of his poems. He knew

* See his Epistle to a Young Bookseller (supposed to be Mr. Alexander Brown, Aberdeen)—

Wad ye hae me be sic a fiel,
As gin I were bit at the squeel,
To gather ilka rhyme and reel
That I hae scrawled,
An' gie them oot to ony chiel
To be o'erhauled.

Skinner's contemporary, Geddes, the distinguished Banffshire priest, poet, and Biblical scholar (1737-1802), to whom he refers (p. 151), seems never to have acknowledged the Scotch songs attributed to him, and his right to the authorship of "The Wee Bit Wifikie" has been disputed. It is impossible not to be struck with the similarity in tastes, talents, and pursuits between Geddes and Skinner, and their eventual strikingly divergent lines in Biblical scholarship—each perhaps equally characteristic of the times.

† The writer has received from two friends (Mr. H. G. Reid and the Rev. W. Presslie, Lochlee) slightly differing copies of an unpublished song of Skinner's, which illustrates forcibly the above argument. The song has every appearance of having been thrown off hastily, with little or no attention to rhyme or finish. The conception is good, and there are in it some good verses and lines, but, on the whole, the execution is careless. It runs thus :—

Bonnie Katie, sittin' spinnin'
At her wheelie, thus was singin'—
"I would burn my spinnin' wheelie,
Jockie, lad, gin ye would steal me.

well what, from the nature of the case, criticism is and must be. As a rule, critics can only judge of a work as it comes before them, weighing its merits, and debiting or crediting it to the author accordingly. They cannot be expected to go into all the circumstances of its composition, and make allowances for shortcomings. Neither will critics judge an author merely from his best works. They take good and bad together, and strike a balance between them, and thus determine the author's rank in the order of literary merit.* Hence it is obvious that a mass of hasty and careless productions might outweigh and swamp an author's finished compositions, as Pharoah's lean kine ate up "the fat and well-favoured." The

"O gin Jockie would but steal me,
O gin Jockie would but steal me;
I would burn my spinnin' wheelie,
Jockie, lad, gin ye would steal me.
"Jockie cam' the ither mornin'.
Katie, says he, are ye scornin',
Do you really mean to try me;
Jockie, lad, I'll ne'er deny thee."

Thus appealed to, Jockie proceeded to give practical proof of his attachment, but before he got his "mou" properly "dichtet," the young lady's mother suddenly interrupted the course of true love with the poker. "Jockie" is said to have been the Rev. John Cumming, the author's grandson.

* Macaulay supplies a striking instance of this practice. He places the first six poets thus—Shakespeare, Homer, Dante, Æschylus, Milton, Sophocles. Here Milton holds only the fifth place, but had this great poet written only the first four books of Paradise Lost, he would, Macaulay says, have deserved to hold the *second* place, next to Shakespeare and before Homer. This deliverance accords substantially with the old critical dictum that Paradise Lost was Parnassus gained, and Paradise Regained was Parnassus lost. It is on the same principle of judgment that University examiners are said to *take off marks*, instead of adding any, for a very erroneous and blundering solution of a problem.

tares may choke the wheat; the inferior poems debase and discredit the whole.

The poems by which Skinner ought to be judged are those to which he himself is known to have given his *imprimatur*. Most of these have been indicated in the course of the Memoir, in connection with the circumstances which called them forth, and the reader will find that they have almost all a finish, which is wanting in the other productions of his muse. They are mostly songs, or rather ballads.

His Songs.

It is by his songs that Skinner, like Burns, will live. If judged by his best work, Skinner stands on almost as high a level as Burns, but his best is but limited in quantity.* For reasons, partly indicated in the course of the Memoir, Skinner devoted but comparatively little time to this species of composition; whereas Burns did scarcely any other literary work than song-making for the last fifteen years of his life, when his powers were in their fullest maturity.

Further, Skinner could not, like Burns, choose as the subject of his songs the most popular of themes—the tender passion in some one of its manifold phases; neither could he treat any theme in the free and unrestrained way that Burns did.

> Ye ken it's nae for ane like me
> To be sae droll as ye can be.

* In a very interesting lecture, delivered under the auspices of the Literary Society of the Aberdeen Grammar School, Feb. 16, 1883, on "The Literary Memories of Aberdeen," the learned Professor Geddes makes Skinner "a far-off second" to Burns. He here undoubtedly judges by the quantity rather than the quality of Skinner's best works.

So he wrote to Burns in his rhymed epistle. He suspected that some might even

Lichtlie him for "Tillygorum;"

much more would they have slighted him had he taken to the writing of love songs.

Thus Skinner seldom touched the tenderer chords of the lyre, but contented himself with comparatively sober, unexciting themes—themes which had a lively interest only for a limited class. How much he suffered in popularity from this cause may be seen from an examination of two of his songs, which, in point of execution, are little, if at all, inferior to his best, namely, "John o' Badenyon" and "Lizzie Liberty."

"John o' Badenyon."

There is an undoubted obscurity in the subject of this song, or, at least, in the refrain. What is meant by "John o' Badenyon" was debated in the columns of the "Aberdeen Free Press" this summer (1882), but with no definite result. The natural idea is that "John o' Badenyon" was a favourite air which the hero played on the pipes. But one correspondent had authority for believing that this was the name which Skinner gave to his family Bible, which had presumably been the gift of the farmer of Badenyon, a place not very distant from Birse, his birth-place.* Another tradition is that "John o' Badenyon" was the name or nickname of a relative of Skinner's, whom he was fond of chaffing. Neither of these two latter explanations harmonises with the tenor of the song. Tuning one's pipes is surely no

* There is a Badenyon near Grantown, Strathspey, for which the natives claim the distinction of being the true local habitation of "John."

suitable preparation for chaffing a friend, still less for reading one's Bible! What suits best with the moral of the song is a simple solitary amusement, such as playing a tune on the pipes, which is wholly within one's own power. The hero claims to have been independent of others, and sufficient to himself—αυταρκης. The theme of the poet is a humorous variation on the old, old theme of preachers and poets, sacred and secular*—the vanity of vanities, all is vanity. The humour is heightened if the reader, as readers will do, identifies the poet with his hero, and pictures to himself the genial author of "Tullochgorum" "ceasing from men," and "tuning his pipes" in seclusion. After all, however, greater simplicity in the subject would, undoubtedly, have enhanced the popularity of the song. It is by much the author's most finished composition in pure literary English.†

* Of the secular singers no one is more impressive than Thackeray, who adopts the melodious Greek version of the words, *mataiotes mataioteton*—

How very weak the very wise,
How very small the very great are.

† There are in the song a few elisions, such as a', o', wi', which, however, are of no account to the rhyme or rhythm of the song. As usual, however, the Scotch peeps out unbidden in the rhymes. Badenyon was rather an unfortunate refrain for a northern bard. In Scotland, especially in the north, little, if any, distinction is made between long and short a's and o's. Such sets of words as paper, pepper; lace, less; note, not; road, rod; cloak, clock, are pronounced exactly in the same way. Even the learned often ignore such distinctions. About thirty years ago, the writer had from an eye-and-ear witness an anecdote amusingly illustrative of this fact. An Aberdeen graduate was teaching the English class in a boarding school in a northern town. An English girl came, in reading, on the word road, and pronounced it in the soft English way. "Rodd!" shouted, in correction, a hard-tongued, native girl, farther down in the class, but eager for promotion. "Rodd!" "Take her place," said the teacher!

"*Lizzie Liberty.*"

From its allegorical character, this song admitted of comparatively free handling, and it supplies not merely negative, but distinct positive proof that Mr. Skinner would have gained greatly by the selection of a more popular subject for his songs. "Lizzie Liberty" takes the outward form and semblance of a love song—speaking of love and courtship, but meaning politics. It was a song for the times. The nations of Europe, with France at their head, had become deeply enamoured of Liberty, but not one of them possessed the art to woo and win the coy nymph. On the contrary, the more they wooed and courted, the more Liberty shunned and eluded them. Skinner shows how and why they failed. Not one of them wooed Liberty in the spirit of liberty. They repelled Liberty, instead of attracting her, by their want of true respect and consideration for her. Though Liberty is "a kindly lass," yet—

> She maunna thole the marriage tether,
> But likes to rove and rink about
> Like Highland cowt amang the heather.

To secure the favour of a nymph of such character and spirit demanded no ordinary delicacy, discretion, and tact. Wealth and station could do but little—

> A stately chiel they ca' John Bull
> Was unco throng and glaiket wi' her.

But to very little purpose. He "couldna get her." He had not the art. Scotch *canniness* might do it, however. There was a chance for Donald Scot. He was the favoured suitor—

> When he comes up the brae so glad,
> She disna ken maist whar to set him.

But even Donald had need of care, caution, tact, and self-restraint. In view of the excesses of the French Revolutionists, there could not be a finer touch of humour than the "pawky" advice to Donald—

Now, Donald, tak' a frien's advice,
I ken fu' weel ye fain wad hae her,
As ye are happy, sae be wise,
And haud ye wi' a smackie frae her!

There are other tender and delicate touches, which prove how well Skinner could have handled the subject of actual, and not mere metaphorical courtship. In fact, the song would, with certain obvious omissions and slight changes, form a very coherent and popular love song. The first four verses with, say, the three last make a pretty consistent whole of this sort, especially if Donald Scot's name is spelt with two *t's*. The writer's impression is that parts of the song were thus sung, in the literal sense, in his early days.

"The Ewie wi' the Crookit Horn."

Though not of the most popular style of song, "The Ewie," as regards subject and treatment, contrasts favourably with the above two songs. The subject of it, indeed, has, as has been seen, been made matter of dispute, but this did not arise from anything obscure or defective in the song itself, but from something altogether outside the song. In subject and treatment this excellent lyric is, indeed, most simple and natural. If the author meant to shadow out in it the violent smashing of an illicit whisky still, he certainly had the art to conceal his art. The reader, in perusing the song, can think of only one thing—

the unfortunate pet ewe so barbarously done to death. He is moved by the purest feelings of pity and indignation on behalf of that one all-interesting object. His thoughts cannot wander from it to secondary considerations, least of all to such uncongenial subjects as whisky and whisky stills. But, in fact, the tradition of the whisky still has now been effectually exploded. There is an accumulation of authoritative evidence against it. Mr. H. G. Reid says (in a letter to the writer) that Skinner's grandson, Mr. Robert Cumming, assured him that the author himself repudiated it when it was first broached during his lifetime. And the Rev. Alexander Low, who has been so long at Longside, says the old people maintained that the story was never heard of till long after the song was written. The Rev. Robert Skinner, a grandnephew of the poet's, has put on record the contradiction given to it by the elderly members of both the Aberdeen and Edinburgh branches of the Skinner family.* The evidence of Bishop William Skinner

* The following letter was addressed by Mr. Robert Skinner to the "Edinburgh Evening Courant":—

May 12, 1866.

Sir,—Having observed in your impression of yesterday an extract from "Fraser's Magazine" regarding the origin of Skinner's song, "The Ewie wi' the Crookit Horn," and ascribing it to the metaphor of a whisky still, I beg to state that it is an entire mistake. The author was my grandfather's brother, and I have often heard my late father say that he had seen "The Ewie" himself at Linshart in the author's lifetime. I have myself seen a picture of it in the possession of the late Bishop William Skinner, who was the grandson of the author, and whom I have often heard repudiate the story. The words of the song are to be taken in their natural sense.—I am, &c.,

Robert Skinner.

with that of his contemporary Edinburgh cousin, both of whom were familiar with Linshart and the author of the song, is quite conclusive repudiation of the story. Not much weight should probably be attached to "ewies" that were actually seen or pictured at Linshart. Mythical ewes were pretty certain to grow up, and, also, thorn bushes.* Besides, if it was Beattie that suggested the subject of the song, the original ewe must have been the property of the Aberdeen Professor, not of the Longside minister.

It is to be hoped that the discussion of these points connected with the subject of Skinner's more popular lyrics has done something to clear away misapprehension, and do justice to the poet. The crooked-horned ewe ought to be henceforth above suspicion. "John o' Badenyon" should take his place with the pipes, and furnish no sacred, but a simple secular amusement, accordant with the tenor of the song. "Lizzie Liberty" may, if the reader so pleases, be clothed with flesh and blood, and permitted to "rove and rink about" at will.

Everything in the songs should, as a rule, be taken in the simplest, the most natural, and obvious sense. And it should be borne in mind that the author was a clergyman, and wrote under some restraint.

On the whole, the reader will probably agree that, in this species of composition, Skinner never did justice to his powers. He was careless as to the choice of subject, or the treatment, or both. When he

* The veritable "buss o' thorn," under which, after "sair seeking," the "crookit horn" was at last found, is now pointed out to the visitor at Linshart. It is within a few yards of the kitchen door. (See Print.)

did choose a fitting subject, and devoted to it adequate care and labour, his success was complete; he produced a Scotch lyric of surpassing excellence, little, if at all, inferior to the best of Burns's.

Judging from their undiminished popularity,* a few of these lyrics, it may be safely assumed, will keep his memory fresh and green, when some contemporary poets—such as Beattie—who, in life, filled a far larger space in the world's eye, and wrote, in general, a far more correct style, will be unread and forgotten. And if he should be remembered only in connection with these few songs, his fate will only be that which necessarily overtakes all but a few poets of the very highest order. The list of English poets

* The writer has been struck by the accumulation of proofs which has been furnished, not simply by the last few years, but even by the last few months, of the lively interest which is still taken in Skinner and his works by Scotchmen all over the world. Within one month, two prominent Aberdeen citizens—Professor Geddes and Mr. Moir, Rector of the Grammar School—have made eulogistic reference to him in lectures on literary subjects. A few months previously there was the correspondence already referred to regarding some of the songs in the newspaper press—not originated or apparently carried on by Episcopalians. A few years ago a popular Scotch author—Mr. Skelton ("Shirley")—introduced Mr. Skinner as a character in a novel—("The Crookit Meg"). In "Lyrics, Legal and Miscellaneous," by the late George Outram, Esq., Advocate, there was published about ten years ago a very clever and lively imitation of "Tullochgorum," entitled the "Cessio Bonorum." (See Appendix.) Scotchmen in America can, it seems, sing and "shak' a fit" to "Tullochgorum," as well as at home. Dr. Beardsley, the American Church historian, in giving an account ("New York Churchman," August 5, 1882) of the death of a Scotchman, a clergyman of the American (Episcopal) Church, says:—"'Tullochgorum' rolled from his lips with a volubility which transported one to the banks and braes of Scotland, and made him almost feel that he was in the midst of the lively dance."

who are known to the great mass of readers by only one single short lyric is already long, and must, from the necessity of the case, fast become longer. It is more than fifty years since Jeffrey demonstrated that, as time goes on, and poets increase and multiply, the great majority of them must eventually come to be known only by a mere fragment of their works. There will be so much good poetry to read, that the mass of readers must perforce confine their studies to a selection of the best. When that day comes, if Gray's "Elegy" is still read, and Wolfe's "Burial of Sir John Moore," Skinner's "Tullochgorum" will not be forgotten nor unsung.

Since the above note has been in print the writer has seen an article in the "Atlantic Monthly" (June, 1883), by Miss Amelia Barr, entitled "The Biography of Two Famous Songs," which songs are Skinner's "Tullochgorum" and Geddes's "Lewie Gordon." The article may be truly said to witness for both sides of the Atlantic to the interest which is still felt in Skinner's best songs. The chief part of it is devoted to Skinner and "Tullochgorum." Miss Barr rates the song highly, and naturally holds that the author should be better known. "When," she writes, "the Rev. John Skinner wrote 'Tullochgorum' had he any idea that this one song would link his name with that of Burns and 'Auld Lang Syne' in perennial honor and affection? Yet Robert Chambers says, 'Certainly no song has taken a deeper hold on the affections of the people, or attained a wider celebrity. It is sung at our social gatherings, printed in every 'collection,' and there are few Scotch people who cannot quote some of its sparkling, pithy lines. Burns called 'Tullochgorum' 'the best Scotch song Scotland ever saw,' and as a social song it stands to-day with 'Auld Lang Syne.' But unlike 'Auld Lang Syne,' the words will not, except in rare cases, recall the name of the man who wrote them. The memory of Burns is inseparable from his work, but very few have heard of the Rev. John Skinner" (p. 769). It was not to be expected that Miss Barr should avoid drawing a natural though erroneous inference from certain historical facts, and holding that "John Skinner's whole heart was

with the Stuart rising," neither, perhaps, is it surprising that, though associating together the two songs, she makes no attempt to point out the striking agreements and contrasts in the character of both the songs and the singers. She is, however, a kindly and appreciative biographer.

APPENDIX

TO

THE LIFE OF DEAN SKINNER,

CONTAINING

SELECTIONS FROM HIS POETICAL WORKS, BOTH LATIN AND ENGLISH.

APPENDIX.

LINES ON THE DEATH OF HIS WIFE, 1799.

Heu ! tandem divulsa mihi suavissima conjux,
Chara mihi in vivis, mortua chara mihi ;
Quam pulchram juvenis juvenem peregrinus amavi,
Quam colui vetulus mutuo amore senem !

Heu ! quot portâsti mecum sine murmure, casus !
Heu ! quoties pro me triste doloris onus !
Tu mihi mulcebas solitos jucunda labores ;
Tu mihi delicias nocte dieque dabas :
Tu formâ præstans, Tu vultu animoque serena,
Tu sacri consors non superanda gradûs :
Cunctis grata comes, sine labe, sine arte decora,
Perpetua morum simplicitate placens.
Te liberi abreptam, Te stirps numerosa nepotum,
Te quot te nôrant pectore, et ore dolent.
Ast ego ;—quot fractae lenimina dulcia vitae
Languidus amisi, Te moriente, Senex !
Dum tamen haec miserum sine Te me terra tenebit,
Solamen misero Te meminisse dabit !
Sit mihi, quem Tecum heic lustra ultra undena beârunt,
Tecum inter sanctos portio laeta choros !
Sic iterum juncti, per lustra immensa fruemur
Placati in Christi cognitione Dei !
Interea, O ! felix Tu Christi in pace quiesce,
Post breve in aeternum restituenda Mihi !

ODE HORATIANA, METRO TULLOCHGORMIANO.

O ! Scriptor admirabilis
Lectoribus innumeris
Quos tangit eloquentiae vis,
Magister Logicorum,
Quis stare contra te queat,
Stare contra, stare contra,
Stare contra te queat
Ex coetu Professorum,
Quis stare contra te queat,
Quos Alma Mater jactitat,
Vel famam tuam adaequat,
Doctissime Doctorum.

Laus tibi sane maxima
Debetur nunc, et gloria,
Et dabitur per secula,
Ad finem seculorum.
Nam tali stylo scribere,
Tali stylo, tali stylo,
Tali stylo scribere
Tot millia verborum,
Nam tali stylo scribere
Argutè tam et lepidè
Quis potuisset praeter te,
Doctissime Doctorum.

Tu vim Naturae insitam
Elucidâsti, ultra quàm
Speravimus, per copiam
Plenam argumentorum ;

Tu altâ voce confutas
Altâ voce, altâ voce,
Altâ voce confutas
Errores Scepticorum,
Tu altâ voce confutas
Opiniones stoicas
Et veritati robur das,
Doctissime Doctorum.

Hinc arte tua scimus nos
"*Communi sensu*" praeditos,
Et pene quasi Angelos
Vel similes illorum;
Quum ope tali fruimur
Ope tali, ope tali,
Ope tali fruimur
Ad regulamen morum,
Quum ope tali fruimur,
Quid ultra petimus? aut cur
Vet lex vel liber legitur?
Doctissime Doctorum.

Nil nunc curamus Humium
Astutum Dialecticum
Quem tu monstrâsti infidum
Et pessimum virorum;
At bonâ fide, quaerimus,
Bonâ fide, bonâ fide,
Bonâ fide quaerimus
Permissu Dominorum;
At bonâ fide quaerimus
Quid, iste nobis ethnicus
Quem tu laudas Roussoius,
Doctissime Doctorum?

Quid nobis Aristoteles,
Quantumvis inter celebres
Philosophiae ordines
Princeps Philosophorum ?
An illi nemo similis ?
Illi nemo, illi nemo,
Illi nemo similis
De grege antiquorum ;
An illi nemo similis,
Quod talisbus praeconijs
Hunc unum honorandum vis,
Doctissime Doctorum ?

Ignoscas ergo, Domine,
Si in tam momentosâ re
Examinemus candidè
Sententias auctorum.
Dic quare tanta intersit,
Quare tanta, quare tanta,
Quare tanta intersit,
Diversitas scriptorum ;
Dic quare tanta intersit
Quae nunc ubique accidit
Varietas, et unde fit,
Doctissime Doctorum.

Cur hic ut falsum respuat,
Quod ille verum praedicat,
Si lux interna dirigat
Consensus animorum ?
Hic certè haeret scrupulus
Certè haeret, certè haeret,
Certè haeret scrupulus
In cordibus piorum,

Hic certè haeret scrupulus,
Quem ut resolvas pleniùs,
Simpliciter te poscimus,
Doctissime Doctorum.

At perge tamen sedulò
Et cathedrâ et calamo
Veri replere studio
Mentes discipulorum ;
Ne tibi metum faciant
Tibi metum, tibi metum,
Tibi metum faciant
Lites inimicorum ;
Ne tibi metum faciant ;
Qui contra ferrum calcitrant,
Et scripta tua lacerant,
Doctissime Doctorum.

O ! si benigna daret fors
Ut tua sit aeterna sors,
Nec unquam te divellat mors
E numero vivorum !
Tunc sine fine scriberes,
Sine fine, sine fine,
Sine fine scriberes,
Volumina librorum ;
Tunc sine fine scriberes,
Paratus ritè indies
Ad instruendos juvenes,
Doctissime Doctorum.

Sed quoniam fata prohibent,
Quod docti omnes exoptent
Ut tibi cursus Dii dent
Perpetuos annorum,

Sis umbra inter animas,
Umbra inter, umbra inter,
Umbra inter animas
Illustres mortuorum,
Sis umbra inter animas
Effaetâ carne libèras,
Vel *sine fine dormias*
Doctissime Doctorum.

Nunc vale, scriptor nobilis,
Qui veritatem protegis,
Et vim naturae adstruis
In choro puerorum,
Quas ego tibi laudes do,
Ego tibi, ego tibi,
Ego tibi laudes do
Ignotus populorum ;
Quas ego tibi laudes do
Jocositer vel serio,
Quo velis cape animo,
Doctissime Doctorum.

In an English poem entitled "The Owl and the Ass," Mr. Skinner ridicules in much the same strain the views of Beattie and the other leading Scotch philosophers of the time, on the subject of "Common Sense" and "The Inward Light:"—

This inward light, this jewel hid,
Is all in all to me,
By it I know, I judge, and act,
Nor would I wish to see
What blockheads call external guides,
I'm wiser far without,
And had I eyes as others have,
I'd surely pluck them out.

No foreign help do I require,
To guide my flights of youth,
For *common sense* is all I need,
To lead me into truth.

. . . . . .

The light within is what directs
Philosophers and owls.

Skinner evidently thought that these philosophers exalted man's natural guides at the expense of the supernatural.

"Probably the very last effusion of" Skinner's "Latin Muse," in the opinion of his grandson, Bishop William Skinner, whose copy of it now lies before the writer, was a letter of thirty-five lines (Hexameters and Pentameters), addressed to Charles Davidson, Esq., Aberdeen, and dated May 1, 1807—six weeks before the author's death. Mr. Davidson was one of "the lambs of" Skinner's "flock," who was gifted "dotibus ingenii felicibus," and had prospered in the world. Skinner had watched over and cherished him from the baptismal font.

Chara mihi et per me baptismi tincte lavacro,
Nomine Bendavid, Carole, chare mihi,
Quem puerum fovi Juvenem, quem lœtus amavi,
Quĕm dignum amplector, laude et amore virum!

He exhorts him, chiefly by a happy adaptation of Horatian maxims, to adhere to the golden rule of life,

Consona cuncta sequens, dissona cuncta cavens.

He then describes, with touching force, his own state of senile decrepĭtude (Anno Aetatis, 86).

Me nunc pigra vetat populo prodesse Senectus,
Muneris officio prorsus inepta sacri;
Languidus, et torpens, nec, ut antea, gratus amicis,
Decrepidam ætatem, debilitatus ago.

There was little sign, however, in this, or in any of his latest productions of debility or decrepitude of *mind*.

ENGLISH POEMS.

THE MONYMUSK CHRISTMAS BA'ING.

Has ne'er in a' this countra been,
Sic shou'dering and sic fa'ing,
As happen'd but few ouks sinsyne,
Here at the Christmas Ba'ing.

. . . . . .

Like bumbees bizzing frae a byke,
Whan birds their riggins tirr;
The swankies[1] lap thro' mire and syke,[2]
Wow as their heads did birr![3]
They yowff'd the ba' frae dyke to dyke
Wi' unco speed and virr;[4]
Some baith their shou'ders up did fyke,[5]
For blythness some did flirr[6]
Their teeth that day.

Stout Steen gart mony a fallow stoit,[7]
And flang them o'er like fail;[8]
Said, "he'd na care ae clippit doit,
Tho' a' should turn their tail."
But wi' a yark Gib made his queet[9]
As dwabil[10] as a flail,
And o'er fell he, maist like to greet,
Just at the eemest ga'ill
O' the kirk that day.

1 Active fellows. 2 Bog. 3 Whir or "sing"—their brain was in a whirl of excitement. 4 Force. 5 Shrug. 6 "Set" or gnash—they grinned with pleasurable excitement. 7 Stumble. 8 Turf. 9 Ankle. 10 Weak, yielding.

The sutor like tod-lowrie[1] lap,
Three fit at ilka stend :[2]
He didna miss the ba' a chap,
Ilk ane did him commend.
But a lang trypall[3] there was Snap,
Cam' on him wi' a bend ;
Gart him, ere ever he wist, cry clap
Upon his nether-end ;
And there he lay.

Sawny soon saw the sutor slain,
He was his ain half-brither ;
I wat right weel he was fu' brain,[4]
And fu' could he be ither ?
He heez'd in ire a puttin-stane,
Twa fell on him thegither,
Wi' a firm gowff[5] he fell'd the tane,
But wi' a gowff the tither
Fell'd him that day.

. . . . . .

Leitch leat the ba' a loundrin[6] lick,
She flew fast like a flain ;[7]
Syne lighted whare faes were maist thick,
Gart ae gruff Grunsie[8] grain.
He whippit up a rotten stick,
I wat he was nae fain,
Leitch wi's fit gae 'im sic a kick,
Till they a' thought him slain
That very day.

1 The fox. 2 Stride. 3 Tall, rather slim, ill-knit fellow. 4 Angry. 5 Heavy blow or stroke. 6 Heavy, sweeping blow. 7 Feather. 8 Sour fellow.

But, waes my heart, for Petrie Gib,
The carlie's head 'twas scaw't,[1]
Upo' the crown he got a skib,[2]
That gart him yowll and claw't.
Sae he wad slip his wa' to Tib,
And spy at hame some fawt;
I thought he might hae gott'n a snib,[3]
Sae thought ilk ane that saw't.

. . . . . .

The millart's man, a supple fallow,
Ran 's he had been red wud;[4]
He fethir'd[5] fiercely like a swallow,
Cry'd, hech! at ilka thud.
A gawsie[6] gurk,[7] wi' phiz o' yallow,
In youth-hood's sappy bud,
Nae twa there wad ha gart him wallow,
Wi' fair play i' the mud.

. . . . . .

The parish-clark came up the yard,
A man fu' meek o' min';
Right jinch[8] he was, and fell well-fawr'd,
His claithing was fu' fine.
Just whare their feet the dubs[9] had glawr'd,[10]
And barken'd[11] them like bryne,
Gley'd Gibby Gun wi' a derf[12] dawrd,[13]
Beft[14] o'er the grave divine.

. . . . . .

When a' were pitying his mishap,
And swarm'd about the clark,
Wi' whittles soon his hat did scraip,
Some dighted down his sark.

1 Scabbed. 2 Stroke. 3 Slight blow. 4 Mad. 5 Flew. 6 Good-looking. 7 Short and thick youth. 8 Neat. 9 Mud. 10 Made slippery. 11 Coated over. 12 Stout. 13 Fling or push. 14 Threw.

Will Winter gae the ba' a chap,
He ween'd he did a wark,
While Sawny, wi' a weel-wyled wap,[1]
Youff'd her in o'er the park
A space and mair.

Wi' that Rob Roy gae a rair,
A rierfu' rout[2] rais'd he,
'Twas heard, they said, three mile and mair,
Wha likes may credit gie.

. . . . . .

Syne a' consented to be freen's,
And lap like sucking fillies;
Some red[3] their hair, some maened[4] their banes,
Some banned the bensome[5] billies.
The pensy[6] blades dossed down on stanes,
Whipt out their sneishin millies;
And a' were blythe to tak' their einds,[7]
And club a pint o' Lillie's
Best ale that day.

TULLOCHGORUM.

"Come, gie's a sang," Montgomery cried,
"And lay your disputes all aside,
What signifies't for folks to chide
For what was done before them:
Let Whig and Tory all agree,
Whig and Tory, Whig and Tory,
Whig and Tory all agree,
To drop their Whig-meg-morum;

1 Stroke. 2 Loud noise. 3 Combed. 4 Bemoaned. 5 Quarrelsome. 6 Foppish, spruce. 7 Refreshment.

Let Whig and Tory all agree
To spend the night wi' mirth and glee,
And cheerful sing alang wi' me
The Reel o' Tullochgorum.

"O ! Tullochgorum's my delight,
It gars us a' in ane unite,
And ony sumph that keeps up spite,
In conscience I abhor him :
For blythe and cheerie we'll be a',
Blythe and cheerie, blythe and cheerie,
Blythe and cheerie we'll be a',
And make a happy quorum ;
For blythe and cheerie we'll be a'
As lang as we hae breath to draw,
And dance till we be like to fa'
The Reel o' Tullochgorum.

"What needs there be sae great a fraise,
Wi' dringing, dull Italian lays,
I wadna gie our ain Strathspeys
For half a hunder score o' them ;
They're dowf[1] and dowie[2] at the best,
Dowf and dowie, dowf and dowie,
Dowf and dowie at the best,
Wi' a' their variorum ;
They're dowf and dowie at the best,
Their *allegros* and a' the rest,
They canna' please a Scottish taste
Compar'd wi' Tullochgorum.

1 Dull. 2 Sickly, spiritless.

'Let warldly worms their minds oppress
Wi' fears o' want and double cess,
And sullen sots themsells distress
Wi' keeping up decorum:
Shall we sae sour and sulky sit,
Sour and sulky, sour and sulky,
Sour and sulky shall we sit
Like old Philosophorum!
Shall we sae sour and sulky sit,
Wi' neither sense, nor mirth, nor wit,
Nor ever try to shak' a fit
To th' Reel o' Tullochgorum?

"May choicest blessings ay attend
Each honest, open-hearted friend,
And calm and quiet be his end,
And a' that's good watch o'er him:
May peace and plenty be his lot,
Peace and plenty, peace and plenty,
Peace and plenty be his lot,
And dainties a great store o' them;
May peace and plenty be his lot,
Unstain'd by any vicious spot,
And may he never want a groat,
That's fond o' Tullochgorum!

"But for the sullen, frumpish fool,
That loves to be oppression's tool,
May envy gnaw his rotten soul,
And discontent devour him;
May dool and sorrow be his chance,
Dool and sorrow, dool and sorrow,
Dool and sorrow be his chance,
And nane say, Wae's me for him!

May dool and sorrow be his chance,
Wi' a' the ills that come frae *France*,
Wha e'er he be that winna dance
The Reel o' Tullochgorum.*

THE EWIE WI' THE CROOKIT HORN.

I.

Were I but able to rehearse
My ewie's praise in proper verse,
I'd sound it forth as loud and fierce
As ever piper's drone could blaw.

---

* Mr. Outram's lyric in imitation of "Tullochgorum," referred to in page 222, runs thus :—

CESSIO BONORUM.

Come ben ta house, and steek ta door,
An' bring her usquebaugh galore,
An' piper play wi' a' your power
Ta Reel of Tullochgorum.
For we'se be croose and canty yet,
Croose an' canty,
Croose an' canty,
We'se be croose an' canty yet,
Around a Hieland jorum.
We'se be croose and canty yet,
For better luck she never met,
She's gotten out, and paid her debt
Wi' a Cessio Ponorum !
Huch, tirrum, tirrum, &c.

She meant ta pargain to dispute,
An' pay ta price, she wadna do 't,
But on a bill her mark she put,
An' hoped to hear no more o'm.
But this would not do.

The ewie wi' the crookit horn,
Wha had kent her might hae sworn
Sic a ewe was never born
Hereabout nor far awa'.
Sic a ewe was never born
Hereabout nor far awa'.

II.

I never needed tar nor keil
To mark her upo' hip or heel,
Her crookit horn did as weel
To ken her by amo' them a'.

For unco little did she ken
O' Shirra's laws an' Shirra's men,
Or Cessio Ponorum.

. . . . . .

They took her up wi' meikle speed,
To jail they bore her, feet an' head,
An' flung her on ta floor o'm.

A little hard swearing, however, extricated "her" from all troubles, procuring "her" the Cessio, which cleared this and all other scores.

She took an oath she cudna hear—
'Twas something about goods an' gear—
She thought it proper no to spier
Afore ta Dominorum.
She kent an' caredna if 'twas true,
Kent an' caredna,
Kent an' caredna
Kent an' caredna if 'twas true,
But easily she swore 'm.
She kent an' caredna if 'twas true,
But scrap't her foot an' made her poo,
Then oich! as to the door she flew
Wi' her Cessio Ponorum!
Huch! tirrum, tirrum, &c.
&c., &c.

She never threaten'd scab nor rot,
But keepit ay her ain jog-trot,
Baith to the fauld and to the cot,
Was never sweir to lead nor caw.
Baith to the fauld and to the cot, &c.

III.

Cauld nor hunger never dang her,
Wind nor wet could never wrang her,
Ance she lay an ouk and langer
Furth aneath a wreath o' snaw.
When ither ewies lap the dyke,
And eat the kail for a' the tyke,
My ewie never played the like,
But tyc'd[1] about the barn wa'.
My ewie never played the like, &c.

IV.

A better or a thriftier beast
Nae honest man could well hae wist,
For, silly thing, she never mist
To hae ilk year a lamb or twa'.
The first she had I gae to Jock,
To be to him a kind o' stock,
And now the laddie has a flock
O' mair nor thirty head ava.
And now the laddie has a flock, &c.

V.

I lookit aye at even' for her,
Lest mishanter[2] shou'd come o'er her,
Or the fowmart[3] might devour her,
Gin the beastie bade awa'.

1 Moved slowly about. 2 Misfortune. 3 Pole-cat

My ewie wi' the crookit horn
Well deserv'd baith girse and corn,
Sic a ewe was never born
Hereabout nor far awa.
Sic a ewe was never born, &c.

VI.

Yet last ouk, for a' my keeping
(Wha can speak it without *greeting ?*)
A villain cam' when I was sleeping,
Sta' my ewie, horn and a'.
I sought her sair upo' the morn,
And down aneath a buss o' thorn
I got my ewie's crookit horn,
But my ewie was awa'.
I got my ewie's crookit horn, &c.

VII.

O ! gin I had the loun that did it,
Sworn I have as well as said it,
Tho' a' the warld should forbid it,
I wad gie his neck a thra'.
I never met wi' sic a turn
As this sin' ever I was born,
My ewie wi' the crookit horn,
Silly ewie, stown awa'.
My ewie wi' the crookit horn, &c.

VIII.

Oh ! had she died o' crook or cauld,
As ewies do when they grow auld,
It wadna been, by mony fauld,
Sae sair a heart to nane o's a'.

For a' the claith that we hae worn,
Frae her and hers sae aften shorn,
The loss o' her we cou'd hae borne
Had fair strae-death ta'en her awa'.
The loss o' her we cou'd hae borne, &c.

IX.

But thus, poor thing, to lose her life,
Aneath a bleedy villain's knife,
I'm really fley't that our guidwife
Will never win aboon't ava.
Oh! a' ye bards benorth Kinghorn,
Call your muses up and mourn
Our ewie wi' the crookit horn
Stown frae's, and fellt and a'!
Our ewie wi' the crookit horn, &c.

LIZZIE LIBERTY.

There lives a lassie i' the braes,
And Lizzie Liberty they ca' her,
When she has on her Sunday claes,
Ye never saw a lady brawer;
So a' the lads are wooing at her,
Courting her but canna get her,
Bonnie Lizzie Liberty, there's ow'r mony wooing at her!

Her mither ware a tabbit[1] mutch,
Her father was an honest dyker,
She's a black-eyed wanton witch,
Ye winna shaw me mony like her;
So a' the lads are wooing at her,
Courting her but canna get her,
Bonny Lizzie Liberty, wow so mony 's wooing at her!

1 A cap with "tabs," or tags for covering the ears.

A kindly lass she is, I'm seer,
Has fowth o' sense and smeddum[1] in her,
And nae a swankie far nor near,
But tries wi' a' his might to win her;
They're wooing at her, fain would hae her,
Courting her but canna get her,
Bonnie Lizzie Liberty, there's ow'r mony wooing at her.

For kindly tho' she be nae doubt,
She manna thole the marriage-tether,
But likes to rove and rink about,
Like Highland cowt amo' the heather.
Yet a' the lads are wooing at her,
Courting her but canna get her,
Bonnie Lizzie Liberty, wow sae mony 's wooing at her.

It's seven year, and some guid mair,
Syn *Dutch Mynheer* made courtship till her,
A merchant bluff and fu' o' care,
Wi' chuffy cheeks, and bags o' siller.
So Dutch Mynheer was wooing at her,
Courting her but cudna get her,
Bonny Lizzie Liberty has ow'r mony wooing at her.

. . . . . .

A stately chiel they ca' *John Bull*
Is unco thrang and glaikit wi' her;
And gin he cud get a' his wull,
There's nane can say what he wad gi'e her.
Johnny Bull is wooing at her,
Courting her, but canna get her,
Filthy ted, she'll never wed, as lang 's sae mony 's wooing at her.

1 Smartness, cleverness.

But *Donald Scot's* the happy lad,
Tho' a' the lave sud try to rate him;
When he steps up the brae sae glad,
She disna ken maist whare to set him.
Donald Scot is wooing at her,
Courting her, will maybe get her,
Bonny Lizzie Liberty, there's ow'r mony wooing at her.

Now Donald tak' a frien's advice,
I ken fu' weel ye fain wad hae her,
As ye are happy, sae be wise,
And ha'd ye wi' a smackie frae her.
Ye're wooing at her, fain wud hae her,
Courting her, will maybe get her,
Bonny Lizzie Liberty, there's ow'r mony wooing at her.

Ye're weel, and wat'sna, lad, they're sayin',
Wi' getting leave to dwall aside her;
And gin ye had her a' your ain,
Ye might na find it mows to guide her.
Ye're wooing at her, fain wad hae her,
Courting her, will maybe get her,
Cunning quine,[1] she's ne'er be mine as lang's sae mony's wooing at her.

JOHN O' BADENYON.

When first I came to be a man
Of twenty years or so,
I thought myself a handsome youth,
And fain the world would know.
In best attire I stept abroad,
With spirits brisk and gay,
And here and there and everywhere
Was like a morn in May.

1 This fine old word is generally spelt *quean*; it is always pronounced *quine* in Aberdeenshire.

No care had I nor fear of want,
But rambled up and down,
And for a beau I might have past
In country or in town.
I still was pleas'd where'er I went,
And when I was alone,
I tun'd my pipe and pleas'd myself
Wi' John o' Badenyon.

Now in the days of youthful prime
A mistress I must find,
For *love*, I heard, gave one an air,
And ev'n improv'd the mind.
On Phillis fair above the rest
Kind fortune fixt my eyes,
Her piercing beauty struck my heart,
And she became my choice.
To Cupid now with hearty prayer
I offer'd many a vow;
And danc'd, and sung, and sigh'd, and swore,
As other lovers do.
But, when at last I breath'd my flame,
I found her cold as stone;
I left the girl, and tuned my pipe
To John o' Badenyon.

When *love* had thus my heart beguil'd
With foolish hopes and vain;
To *friendship's* port I steer'd my course,
And laugh'd at lover's pain.
A friend I got by lucky chance,
'Twas something like divine,
An honest friend 's a precious gift,
And such a gift was mine.

And now whatever might betide
A happy man was I,
In any strait I knew to whom
I freely might apply.
A strait soon came: my friend I tried;
He heard, and spurned my moan;
I hied me home, and tuned my pipe
To John o' Badenyon.

Methought I should be wiser next
And would a *patriot* turn,
Began to doat on Johnny Wilkes,
And cry up Parson Horne.*
Their manly spirit I admired,
And praised their noble zeal,
Who had with flaming tongue and pen
Maintained the public weal.
But ere a month or two had past,
I found myself betrayed,
'Twas *self* and *party* after all,
For a' the stir they made.
At last I saw the factious knaves
Insult the very throne;
I cursed them a', and tun'd my pipe
To John o' Badenyon.

What next to do I mused a while,
Still hoping to succeed,
I pitched on *books* for company,
And gravely tried to read:

* This song was composed when Wilkes and Horne were making a noise about liberty.

I bought and borrowed everywhere,
And studied night and day,
Nor mist what dean or doctor wrote
That happened in my way.
Philosophy I now esteemed
The ornament of youth,
And carefully through many a page
I hunted after truth.
A thousand various schemes I try'd,
And yet was pleased with none ;
I threw them by, and tun'd my pipe
To John o' Badenyon.

And now ye youngsters everywhere,
That wish to make a show,
Take heed in time, nor fondly hope
For happiness below.
What you may fancy pleasure here,
Is but an empty name,
And *girls*, and *friends*, and *books*, and so,
You'll find them all the same.
Then be advised and warning take
From such a man as me ;
I'm neither Pope nor Cardinal,
Nor one of high degree.
You'll meet displeasure everywhere,
Then do as I have done,
Ev'n tune your pipe and please yourselves
With John o' Badenyon.

THE OLD MAN'S SONG.*

O ! why should old age so much wound us !
There is nothing in it all to confound us ;
For how happy now am I,
With my old wife sitting by,
And our bairns and our oys all around us.
For how happy now am I, &c.

We began in the warld wi' naething,
And we've jogged on, and toil'd for the ae thing ;
We made use of what we had,
And our thankful hearts were glad,
When we got the bit meat and the claithing.
We made use of what we had, &c.

We have liv'd our lifetime contented,
Since the day we became first acquainted ;
It's true we've been but poor,
And we are so to this hour,
But we never yet repin'd or lamented.
It's true we've been but poor, &c.

When we had any stock we never vauntit,
Nor did we hing our heads when we wantit ;
But we always gave a share
Of the little we cou'd spare
When it pleased a kind Heaven to grant it.
But we always gave a share, &c.

---

* This song is sung to the air of "Dumbarton's Drums," an O being added to the end of each of the long lines.

We never laid a scheme to be wealthy,
By means that were cunning or stealthy;
But we always had the bliss,
And what further could we wiss,
To be pleased with ourselves, and be healthy.
But we always had the bliss, &c.

What tho' we cannot boast of our guineas,
We have plenty of Jockies and Jeanies;
And these, I'm certain, are
More desirable by far
Than a bag full of poor yellow steinies.[1]
And these, I am certain, are, &c.

We have seen many wonder and ferly,
Of changes that almost are yearly,
Among rich folks up and down,
Both in country and in town,
Who now live but scrimply and barely.
Among rich folks up and down, &c.

Then why should people brag of prosperity?
A straiten'd life we see is no rarity;
Indeed we've been in want,
And our living 's been but scant,
Yet we never were reduced to need charity.
Indeed we've been in want, &c.

In this house we first came together,
Where we've long been a father and mither;
And tho' not of stone and lime,
It will last us all our time,
And, I hope, we shall ne'er need anither.
And tho' not of stone and lime, &c.

1 Little stones, sovereigns, or guineas.

And when we leave this poor habitation,
We'll depart with a good commendation ;
We'll go hand in hand, I wiss,
To a better house than this,
To make room for the next generation.
We'll go hand in hand, I wiss, &c.
Then why should old age so much wound us, &c.

THE STIPENDLESS PARSON.

How happy a life does the parson possess,
Who would be no greater, nor fears to be less ;
Who depends on his book and his gown for support,
And derives no preferment from conclave or court.

Without glebe or manse settl'd on him by law,
No stipend to sue for, nor vic'rage to draw ;
In discharge of his office he holds him content,
With a croft and a garden, for which he pays rent.

With a neat little cottage and furniture plain,
And a spare room to welcome a friend now and then,
With a good-humour'd wife in his fortune to share,
And ease him at all times of family care.

With a few of the Fathers, the oldest and best,
And some modern extracts pick'd out from the rest,
With a Bible in Latin, and Hebrew, and Greek,
To afford him instruction each day of the week.

With labour below, and with help from above,
He cares for his *flock*, and is blest with their love ;
Tho' his living, perhaps, in the main may be scant,
He is sure, while *they have*, that he'll ne'er be in want.

With no worldly projects nor hurries perplext,
He sits in his closet and studies his text ;
And while he converses with Moses or Paul,
He envies not bishop, nor dean in his stall.

Not proud to the poor, nor a slave to the great,
Neither factious in church, nor pragmatic in state,
He keeps himself quiet within his own sphere,
And finds work sufficient in preaching and prayer.

In what little dealings he's forced to transact,
He determines with plainness and candour to act,
And the great point on which his ambition is set,
Is to leave at the last neither riches nor debt.

Thus calmly he steps through the valley of life,
Unencumbered with wealth, and a stranger to strife ;
On the bustlings around him unmov'd he can look,
And at home always pleas'd with his wife and his book.

And when in old age he drops into the grave,
This humble remembrance he wishes to have :
" By good men respected, by the evil oft tried,
" Contented he lived, and lamented he died ! "

THE AULD MINISTER'S SONG.

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
Or friendship e'er grow cauld ;
Should we nae tighter draw the knot
Aye as we're growing auld ?

. . . . . .

Sae weel's I min' upo' the days
That we in youthful pride
Had used to ramble up the braes
On bonnie Boggie's side.
Nae fairies on the haunted green,
Where moonbeams twinkling shine,
Mair blithely frisk aroun' their queen
Than we did langsyne.

. . . . . .

Though ye live on the banks o' Doun,
And me besooth the Tay,
Ye weel might ride to Falkland town
Some bonnie simmer's day.
And at that place, where Scotland's king
Aft birled[1] the beer and wine,
Let's drink, and dance, and laugh, and sing,
An' crack o' auld langsyne.*

When Mr. Skinner was in his eightieth year, Mr. Ferguson of Pitfour expressed a wish to be permitted to do something to add to his comfort. In a rhyming epistle the contented poet and pastor explained that, with his simple tastes, he had all the comforts that he could enjoy, and that now he was chiefly looking upwards and forwards :—

Now in my eightieth year, my thread near spun,
My race through poverty and labour run ;

---

1 Pushed about.

* These two stanzas, and the former of the two in the following extract, their author is made to recite by "Shirley" in the "Crookit Meg."

Wishing to be by all my flock beloved,
And for long service by my Judge approved.
Death at my door, and Heaven in my eye,
From rich or great, what comfort now need I?

Let but our sacred edifice* go on,
With cheerfulness till all the work be done;
Let but my flock be faithfully supplied,
My friends, all with their lot, well satisfied.
Then, O! with joy and comfort from on high,
Let me in Christian quiet calmly die,
And lay my ashes in my Grizzel's grave,
'Tis all I want or wish on earth to have, &c.†

* A new church which was being built for the congregation.

† Published in 1834 by Peter Buchan and in 1859 by Mr. Reid.

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Edinburgh: JOHN MENZIES & Co.; ANDREW ELLIOT. Aberdeen: A. BROWN & Co. Price 6d.

The Kings of Israel—Bible Class Primer. Cloth, 8d.; paper, 6d.

Edinburgh: MACNIVEN & WALLACE.